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PERSONAL TRAITS OF  
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BYRON—SHELLEY—MOORE—ROGERS  
KEATS—SOUTHEY—LANDOR

EDITED BY  
EDWARD T. MASON

*WITH PORTRAITS*

NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1885

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To

M. Y. AND L. H. Y.

THESE VOLUMES ARE GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

---

“ Let those who are in favour with their stars,  
Of publick honour and proud titles boast,  
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,  
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most.  
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread  
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,  
And in themselves their pride lies buried,  
For at a frown they in their glory die.  
The painful warrior famoused for fight,  
After a thousand victories, once foiled,  
Is from the book of honour razed quite,  
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd ;  
Then happy I, that love and am belov'd,  
Where I may not remove, nor be remov'd.”



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## PREFACE.

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N EARLY one hundred years ago, while revolution was teaching its stern lessons in France, English literature shook off the torpor in which it had lain so long, and awoke to a new life, a life of power and of beauty. To that great awakening may be traced everything of real moment and significance which has since distinguished the literature of England. Now the forces of that time seem well-nigh spent, and no fresh impulse has come. One by one the lights have gone out ; their places are unfilled.

Standing to-day at the close of a brilliant period, we have the means of estimating that period with intelligence, and of gaining adequate knowledge of the men who made it illustrious—knowledge not only of their works, but of themselves. As a contribution to this study, the present series of books has been prepared.

The aim of these volumes is to describe and illustrate the personal characteristics of twenty-seven

authors, who have been chosen as fairly representative of their period. Careful search has been made for everything which might throw light upon these authors; upon their appearance, habits, manners; upon their talk, their work and their play, their strength and weakness—physical, mental, moral. Records of acts directly exemplifying traits of character have been given, whenever it was possible, in preference to mere expressions of individual opinion. Any testimony other than that of eye-witnesses has been admitted with reluctance. A strictly chronological arrangement was impracticable, as the authors all belong to the same general period. They have, therefore, been distributed into such groups as were suggested by the likeness or unlikeness which the men bore to one another; an arrangement according either to affinity or to contrast. Although the search for materials has been carefully made, it is by no means exhaustive. Nevertheless, the hope is entertained that nothing of vital importance has been overlooked.<sup>1</sup> The materials have been found abundant, bewilderingly so, as may be inferred from the fact that the contents of these volumes have been drawn from over two hundred different sources.

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<sup>1</sup> The editor will be very thankful for any suggestion of other sources of information which may occur to readers of this book.

The method chosen by the editor has been criticised by friends, who think that it would have been better to embody the results of investigation in a continuous narrative, thus avoiding the harsh transitions of style and the literary awkwardness of a mere compilation. While recognizing the force of these criticisms, the editor is quite confident that his original design is better fitted to accomplish the purpose of his work. Accordingly, the several witnesses are permitted to tell their stories each in his own way. Nothing which directly served the end in view has been excluded because it happened to be written in bad English. On the witness-stand the testimony of the untaught peasant is often quite as valuable as that of the bard or the sage; and so it happens that some strange and unpleasing contrasts will be found in these pages; for here the skilful and the clumsy stand side by side. The graceful and musical diction of De Quincey may be followed by the shabby finery of Willis, and the reader may be led from Carlyle's rugged force, or the dreamlike beauty of Hawthorne, to the flippancy of some obscure literary hack.

The present volume is devoted to seven authors, whose lives and characters present a range of humanity varying widely in purpose, in experience, and in achievement. The leading events of their lives have been embodied in brief chronological

tables. It is hoped that the dates are fairly accurate, as they have been derived from original authorities. The bibliographical information presented in the introductory notes is not meant to be exhaustive, but merely suggestive—"book openeth book." In addition to this, the reader's attention is called to the fourth volume of T. H. Ward's "English Poets" (Macmillan & Co., London and New York, 1880). This volume contains admirable notices of the modern English poets, estimates of their personal characters as well as of their literary works. The authors under present consideration are noted as follows: Byron, by J. A. Symonds; Shelley, by F. W. H. Myers; Moore, by E. W. Gosse; Rogers and Southey, by Sir Henry Taylor; Keats, by Matthew Arnold; Landor, by Lord Houghton.

Extracts have been made from the following American copyrighted books: Mrs. Kemble's "Records of Later Life" (Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1882); James T. Fields' "Old Acquaintance: Barry Cornwall and Some of his Friends" (J. R. Osgood & Co., Boston, 1876); Dr. R. Shelton Mackenzie's edition of "Noctes Ambrosianæ," 5 vols. (New York, 1854); N. P. Willis' "Pencillings by the Way" (Charles Scribner, New York, 1853); *The Atlantic Monthly* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston); *Lippincott's Magazine* (J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia). Permission was kindly granted to make

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selections from these works, and the courtesy of their respective owners is thankfully acknowledged.

Among books of reference which have been especially useful, the Catalogue of the Brooklyn Library holds the foremost place. This admirable work has been found an intelligent and trustworthy guide, and it is a pleasure once more to call attention to its excellence. It is certainly one of the most valuable helps which a literary worker can possess. The editor would also express his sense of personal obligation to Mr. S. B. Noyes, of the Brooklyn Library, for favors conferred, with unwearied kindness, at every stage in the preparation of these volumes.





## CHRONOLOGY.

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Born.		Died.
1763.	ROGERS.	1855.
1774.	SOUTHEY.	1843.
1775.	LANDOR.	1864.
1779.	MOORE.	1852.
1788.	BYRON.	1824.
1792.	SHELLEY.	1822.
1795.	KEATS.	1821.



GEORGE GORDON NOEL,

*6th Lord Byron.*

1788-1824.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

---

IN a letter to his sisters, Macaulay says,<sup>1</sup> "The worst thing that I know about Lord Byron is the very unfavorable impression which he made on men who certainly were not inclined to judge him harshly, and who, as far as I know, were never personally ill-used by him. Sharp and Rogers both speak of him as an unpleasant, affected, splenetic person. I have heard hundreds and thousands of people who never saw him rant about him; but I never heard a single expression of fondness for him fall from the lips of any of those who knew him well." On the other hand, some of the men who knew him intimately left records which emphatically express admiration and affection for the man, as may be seen by consulting pp. 68-71 of this volume.

There is, perhaps, no character among British authors so hard to understand, or as to which there is so wide a difference of opinion. Contradiction and perplexity abound in every account of his life. The

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<sup>1</sup> Trevelyan (George Otto). *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*. 2 vols, 8vo. London, 1876.

student is confused and baffled by the conflicting testimony of witnesses who have equal claims to his belief. The versatility of Byron, remarkable as it was, does not account for this ; the explanation is that, consciously or unconsciously, he was generally acting, playing a part, posing in some attitude which he thought becoming. His nature was morbid in many ways, but in none more notably than in his utter want of simplicity ; he was thoroughly artificial.

Among the many sources of information, the following works deserve particular attention : Moore's and Galt's "Lives of Byron ;" Leigh Hunt's "Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries ;" Trelawny's "Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron" (republished, with alterations and additions, as "Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author") ; Julius Millingen's "Memoirs of the Affairs of Greece ;" Karl Elze's "Life of Byron ;" A. G. L'Estrange's "Life of the Rev. W. Harness ;" the Countess of Blessington's "Conversations of Lord Byron," and the same writer's "Idler in Italy ;" Rev. F. Hodgson's "Memoirs ;" and a series of letters relating to Lord and Lady Byron, published in the *Athenæum*, August 18, 1883.

Leigh Hunt was Byron's severest critic. The book in which he recorded his impressions of his former friend and patron was bitterly abused, and he was himself rebuked, in no measured terms, for having written it. Undoubtedly it was written in great bitterness of heart, and therefore its statements must be received with some caution. But Hunt had an excellent reputation for honesty of purpose



and for kindly feeling, a reputation generally accorded to him by those who were in a position to judge fairly, and this fact must also be borne in mind. In his autobiography, written in his old age, he reviews this youthful work in a calm, dispassionate manner, regretfully, indeed, but without retracting any of his former statements of fact. On the contrary, he protests that he said nothing untrue ; and as the charges have not been refuted by any competent authority, they cannot be dismissed.

The most satisfactory work upon Byron's life is that of Karl Elze. The original work was published in Germany, in 1870 ; and in 1872 it was translated into English, and published by John Murray (London). A new edition has recently been published, containing additional matter (Berlin : Oppenheim, 1881) ; but I have not heard of a translation of this. Professor Elze's tenth chapter, "Characteristics," is an admirable summary of the widely opposed views of Byron's life and character, in which the statements of the various authorities are clearly presented. Among the smaller books, designed for popular circulation, the best is Mr. John Nichol's volume in the "English Men of Letters" series ; the book is pleasantly written, and is quite free from partisanship of any kind.

The latest contribution, "The Real Lord Byron," by John Cordy Jeafferson, does not add materially to the sum of previous knowledge of the subject.

## LEADING EVENTS OF BYRON'S LIFE.

1788.                    Born, January 22d, in London.
- 1801.—(Aged 13.) A scholar at Harrow.
- 1805.—(Aged 17.) Enters Cambridge University.
- 1806.—(Aged 18.) Publishes a volume of poems, which he almost immediately suppresses.
- 1807.—(Aged 19.) Publishes "Hours of Idleness."
- 1809.—(Aged 21.) Publishes "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Takes his seat in Parliament. Goes abroad.
- 1811.—(Aged 23.) Returns to England.
- 1812.—(Aged 24.) Publishes the first and second cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage."
- 1813.—(Aged 25.) Publishes "The Bride of Abydos."
- 1814.—(Aged 26.) Publishes "The Corsair."
- 1815.—(Aged 27.) Marries Miss Milbanke, January 2d.
- 1816.—(Aged 28.) His wife leaves him in January; he leaves England in April. Meets Shelley, Mary W. Godwin, and Jane Clairmont, at Geneva, in May.<sup>1</sup>
- 1817.—(Aged 29.) Publishes "Manfred."
- 1818.—(Aged 30.) Publishes "Beppo."
- 1819.—(Aged 31.) Publishes the first part of "Don Juan."
- 1820.—(Aged 32.) Publishes "Marino Faliero."
- 1821.—(Aged 33.) Publishes "The Two Foscari," "Sardanapalus," and "Cain."
- 1822.—(Aged 34.) Engaged upon *The Liberal*, with Leigh Hunt. Publishes "The Deformed Transformed," "Werner," and the concluding cantos of "Don Juan."
- 1823.—(Aged 35.) Sails for Greece, July 14th.
- 1824.—(Aged 36 years, 2 months.) Dies, in Greece, April 19th.

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<sup>1</sup> From this year, 1816, until his departure for Greece, Byron lived upon the continent, for the greater part of the time in Italy. He never returned to England.

## BYRON.

**T**HAT, as a child, his temper was violent, or rather sullenly passionate, is certain. Even when in petticoats he showed the same uncontrollable spirit with his nurse which he afterwards exhibited, when an author, with his critics. Being angrily reprimanded by her one day for having soiled or torn a new frock in which he had been just dressed, he got into one of his "silent rages" (as he himself has described them), seized the frock with both his hands, rent it from top to bottom, and stood in sullen stillness, setting his censurer and her wrath at defiance.—THOMAS MOORE ("Life of Byron").<sup>1</sup>

*Temper in  
childhood.*

The malformation of his foot was, even at this childish age,<sup>2</sup> a subject on which he showed peculiar sensitiveness. I have been told by a gentleman of Glasgow, that the person who nursed his wife, and who still lives in his family, used often to join

*Sensitive-  
ness about  
his deform-  
ity.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Moore (Thomas). Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of his Life. 2 vols, 4to. London, 1830.

<sup>2</sup> When eight years old.

*Sensitive-  
ness about  
his deform-  
ity.*

the nurse of Byron when they were out with their respective charges, and one day said to her as they walked together, "What a pretty boy Byron is! What a pity he has such a leg!" On hearing this allusion to his infirmity, the child's eyes flashed with anger, and striking at her with a little whip which he held in his hand, he exclaimed impatiently, "Dinna speak of it!" Sometimes, however, as in after-life, he could talk indifferently, and even jestingly, of this lameness; and there being another little boy in the neighborhood who had a similar defect in one of his feet, Byron would say, laughingly, "Come and see the twa laddies with the twa club feet going up the Broad-street." <sup>1</sup>—T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*School-life.*

At school I was . . . remarked for the extent and readiness of my *general* information; but in all other respects idle, capable of great sudden exertions (such as thirty or forty Greek hexameters, of course with such prosody as pleased God), but of few continuous drudgeries. My qualities were much more oratorical and martial than poetical: . . . No one had the least notion that I should subside into poesy.—LORD BYRON (quoted in Moore's "Life of Byron").

*Prefers  
good fellow-  
ship to  
scholarship.*

Of his class-fellows at the grammar-school there are many . . . still alive, by whom he is well remembered; and the general impression they retain of him is, that he was a lively, warm-hearted, and high-spirited boy—passionate and resentful, but

<sup>1</sup> See also pp. 23, 24.

affectionate and companionable with his school-fellows—and to a remarkable degree venturous and fearless, and (as one of them significantly expressed it) “always more ready to give a blow than to take one.” . . . He was, indeed, much more anxious to distinguish himself among his school-fellows by prowess in all sports and exercises, than by advancement in learning. Though quick, when he could be persuaded to attend, or had any study that pleased him, he was in general very low in the class, nor seemed ambitious of being promoted any higher. —T. MOORE (“Life of Byron”).

*Prefers  
good-fellow-  
ship to  
scholarship.*

While Lord Byron and Mr. Peel were at Harrow together, a tyrant some few years older . . . claimed a right to fag little Peel, which claim (whether rightly or wrongly I know not) Peel resisted. His resistance, however, was in vain ; — not only subdued him, but determined also to punish the refractory slave ; and proceeded forthwith to put this determination in practice, by inflicting a kind of bastinado on the inner fleshy side of the boy's arm, which, during the operation, was twisted around with some degree of technical skill, to render the pain more acute. While the stripes were succeeding each other, and poor Peel writhing under them, Byron saw and felt for the misery of his friend ; and although he knew that he was not strong enough to fight —, with any hope of success, and that it was dangerous even to approach him, he advanced to the scene of action, and with a blush of rage, tears in his eyes, and a voice trembling between terror and indignation, asked very

*A generous  
attempt to  
shield a  
school-mate.*

*A generous  
attempt to  
shield a  
school-mate.*

humbly if — would be pleased to tell him, “how many stripes he meant to inflict.” “Why,” returned the executioner, “you little rascal, what is that to you?” “Because, if you please,” said Byron, “I would take half.”—T. MOORE (“Life of Byron”).

*Bashfulness  
in youth.*

One of the most intimate and valued of his friends, at this period,<sup>1</sup> has given me this account of her first acquaintance with him: “The first time I was introduced to him was at a party at his mother’s, when he was so shy that she was forced to send for him three times before she could persuade him to come into the drawing-room, to play with the young people at a round game. He was then a fat, bashful boy, with his hair combed straight over his forehead . . . The next morning Mrs. Byron brought him to call at our house, when he still continued shy and formal in his manner. The conversation turned upon Cheltenham, where we had been staying, the amusements there, the plays, etc.; and I mentioned that I had seen the character of Gabriel Lackbrain very well performed. His mother getting up to go, he accompanied her, making a formal bow, and I, in allusion to the play, said, ‘Goodby, Gaby.’ His countenance lighted up, his handsome mouth displayed a broad grin, all his shyness vanished, never to return, and upon his mother’s saying ‘Come, Byron, are you ready?’—no, she might go by herself, he would stay and talk a little longer; and from that moment he used to come in and go out at all hours, as it pleased him, and in our house consid-

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<sup>1</sup> When he was about sixteen years old.

ered himself perfectly at home."—T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*Bashfulness  
in youth.*

Lord Byron's face was handsome ; eminently so in some respects. He had a mouth and chin fit for Apollo ; and when I first knew him, there were both lightness and energy all over his aspect. But his countenance did not improve with age, and there were always some defects in it. The jaw was too big for the upper part. It had all the wilfulness of a despot in it. The animal predominated over the intellectual part of his head, inasmuch as the face altogether was large in proportion to the skull. The eyes also were set too near one another ; and the nose, though handsome in itself, had the appearance, when you saw it closely in front, of being grafted on the face, rather than growing properly out of it. His person was very handsome, though terminating in lameness, and tending to fat and effeminacy ; which makes me remember what a hostile fair one objected to him, namely, that he had little beard. . . . His lameness was only in one foot, the left ; and it was so little visible to casual notice, that as he lounged about a room (which he did in such a manner as to screen it) it was hardly perceivable. But it was a real and even a sore lameness. Much walking upon it fevered and hurt it. It was a shrunken foot, a little twisted.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries").<sup>1</sup>

*Personal  
appearance.*

<sup>1</sup> Hunt (James Henry Leigh). Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries, with Recollections of the Author's Life. 2 vols, 8vo. London, 1828.

*Personal  
appearance.*

His head was remarkably small, so much so as to be rather out of proportion with his face. The forehead, though a little too narrow, was high, and appeared more so from his having his hair (to preserve it, he said) shaved over the temples ; while the glossy, dark brown curls, clustering over his head, gave the finish to its beauty. When to this is added that his nose, though handsomely, was rather thickly shaped, that his teeth were white and regular, and his complexion colorless, as good an idea, perhaps, as it is the power of mere words to convey may be conceived of his features.—T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*A first sight  
of Byron.*

*Genoa, April 1, 1823.*—Saw Lord Byron for the first time. The impression of the first few moments disappointed me, as I had, both from the portraits and descriptions given, conceived a different idea of him. I had fancied him taller, with a more dignified and commanding air ; and I looked in vain for the hero-looking sort of person with whom I had so long identified him in imagination. His appearance is, however, highly prepossessing ; his head is finely shaped, and the forehead open, high, and noble ; his eyes are gray and full of expression, but one is visibly larger than the other ; the nose is large and well shaped, but from being a little *too thick*, it looks better in profile than in front-face ; his mouth is the most remarkable feature in his face, the upper lip of Grecian shortness, and the corners descending ; the lips full and finely cut. In speaking, he shows his teeth very much, and they are white and even ; but I observed that even in his



smile—and he smiles frequently—there is something of a scornful expression in his mouth that is evidently natural, and not, as many suppose, affected. This particularly struck me. His chin is large and well shaped, and finishes well the oval of his face. He is extremely thin, indeed so much so that his figure has almost a boyish air ;<sup>1</sup> his face is peculiarly pale, but not the paleness of ill-health, as its character is that of fairness, the fairness of a dark-haired person—and his hair (which is getting rapidly gray) is of a very dark brown, and curls naturally ; he uses a good deal of oil in it, which makes it look still darker. His countenance is full of expression, and changes with the subject of conversation ; it gains on the beholder the more it is seen, and leaves an agreeable impression. I should say that melancholy was its prevailing character, as I observed that when any observation elicited a smile—and they were many, as the conversation was gay and playful—it appeared to linger but for a moment on his lip, which instantly resumed its former expression of seriousness.

His whole appearance is remarkably gentleman-like, and he owes nothing of this to his toilet, as his coat appears to have been many years made, is much too large—and all his garments convey the idea of having been purchased ready-made, so ill do they fit him. There is a *gaucherie* in his move-

*A first sight  
of Byron.*

<sup>1</sup> In writing of a meeting with Byron, which occurred about two years before the date of the Countess of Blessington's description, Leigh Hunt says, "Upon seeing Lord Byron, I hardly knew him, he was grown so fat." Byron's precautionary measures during these two years must have been remarkably successful.

*A first sight  
of Byron.*

ments, which evidently proceeds from the perpetual consciousness of his lameness, that appears to haunt him ; for he tries to conceal his foot when seated, and when walking has a nervous rapidity in his manner. He is very slightly lame, and the deformity of his foot is so little remarkable that I am not now aware which foot it is.<sup>1</sup>—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").<sup>2</sup>

*Captain  
Trelawny's  
impressions.*

In external appearance Byron realized that ideal standard with which imagination adorns genius. He was in the prime of life, thirty-five ; of middle height, five feet eight and a half inches ; regular features, without a stain or furrow on his pallid skin, his shoulders broad, chest open, body and limbs finely proportioned. His small finely-finished head and curly hair had an airy and graceful appearance from the massiveness and length of his throat ; you saw his genius in his eyes and lips. In short Nature could do little more than she had done for him, both in outward form, and in the inward spirit she had given to animate it. . . . His lameness certainly helped to make him sceptical,

<sup>1</sup> This description is substantially the same which the Countess gives in her "Idler in Italy," except that in that work she remarks that "his laugh is musical, but he rarely indulged in it during our interview ; and when he did, it was quickly followed by a graver aspect, as if he liked not this exhibition of hilarity." She also says, "His are the smallest male hands I ever saw ; finely shaped, delicately white"—with farther particulars concerning the beauty of his nails, which she likens to pink sea-shells, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Blessington (Margaret P. G., *Countess of*). *Conversations of Lord Byron*. 8vo. London, 1850.

cynical, and savage. There was no peculiarity in his dress, it was adapted to the climate ;<sup>1</sup> a tartan jacket braided, . . . a blue velvet cap with a gold band, and very loose nankeen trowsers, strapped down so as to cover his feet ; his throat was not bare as represented in drawings.—E. J. TRELAWNY (“Records of Shelley, Byron, etc.”).<sup>2</sup>

*Captain  
Trelawny's  
impressions.*

He had most beautiful eyes, well set in his head ; they were like a cat's, changing continually in color, now brown, now golden, then green, full of ever-varying expression.—E. J. TRELAWNY (*Whitehall Review*, 1880).

In a letter of Coleridge's to a friend, written April 10, 1816, he thus speaks of Byron : “If you had seen Lord Byron, you could scarcely disbelieve him. So beautiful a countenance I scarcely ever saw—his teeth so many stationary smiles, his eyes the open portals of the sun—things of light and for light — and his forehead so ample, and yet so flexible, passing from marble smoothness into a hundred wreaths and lines and dimples correspondent to the feelings and sentiments he is uttering.”—JAMES GILLMAN (“Life of Coleridge”).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That of Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Trelawny (Edward John). Records of Shelley, Byron, and the author. 2 vols., 12mo. London, 1878. (Published originally in 1858, with the title, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron*.)

<sup>3</sup> Gillman (James). Life of S. T. Coleridge, vol. I. 8vo. London, 1838. (*Only one volume was published.*)

Perhaps the beauty of his physiognomy has been more highly spoken of than it really merited. Its chief grace consisted, when he was in a gay humor, of a liveliness which gave a joyous meaning to every articulation of the muscles and features; when he was less agreeably disposed, the expression was morose to a very repulsive degree.—JOHN GALT ("Life of Byron").<sup>1</sup>

*Personal  
appearance.*

A countenance, exquisitely modelled to the expression of feeling and passion, and exhibiting the remarkable contrast of very dark hair and eyebrows, with light and expressive eyes, presented to the physiognomist the most interesting subject for the exercise of his art. The predominating expression was that of deep and habitual thought, which gave way to the most rapid play of features when he engaged in interesting discussion; so that a brother poet compared them to the sculpture of a beautiful alabaster vase, only seen to perfection when lighted from within. The flashes of mirth, indignation, or satirical dislike, which frequently animated Lord Byron's countenance, might, during an evening's conversation, be mistaken by a stranger for its habitual expression, so easily and so happily was it formed for them all; but those who had an opportunity of studying his features for a length of time, and upon various occasions, both of rest and emotion, will agree with us that their proper language was that of melancholy.—SIR WALTER SCOTT (*Quarterly Review*, October, 1816).

<sup>1</sup> Galt (John). Life of Lord Byron. 16mo. London, 1830.

The absence of any description by the Countess Guiccioli of Byron's appearance calls for a word of explanation ; the countess wrote several descriptions, and she might reasonably be supposed to know how Byron looked ; her manner, however, fails to inspire confidence. She says : "The Almighty has created beings of such harmonious and ideal beauty that they defy description or analysis. Such a one was Lord Byron. His wonderful beauty of expression . . . summed up in one magnificent type the highest expression of every possible kind of beauty." And again she refers to "that kind of supernatural light which seemed to surround him like a halo."<sup>1</sup> In view of these observations, the failure to chronicle the lady's portrayal of her friend's "harmonious and ideal beauty" may perhaps be pardoned.

*Personal  
appearance.*

His appearance on horseback was not advantageous, and he seemed aware of it, for he made many excuses for his dress and equestrian appointments. His horse was literally covered with various trappings, in the way of cavessons, martingales, and Heaven knows how many other (to me) unknown inventions. The saddle was *à la hussarde* with holsters, in which he always carried pistols. His dress consisted of a nankeen jacket and trousers, which appeared to have shrunk from washing ; the jacket embroidered in the same color, and with three rows of buttons ; the waist very short, the

*On horse-  
back.*

<sup>1</sup> Guiccioli (Teresa Gamba, *Contessa*). Recollections of Byron. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1869.

*On horse-  
back.*

back very narrow, and the sleeves set in as they used to be ten or fifteen years before ; a black stock, very narrow ; a dark blue velvet cap with a shade, and a very rich gold band and large gold tassel at the crown ; nankeen gaiters, and a pair of blue spectacles, completed his costume, which was anything but becoming. This was his general dress of a morning for riding, but I have seen it changed for a green tartan plaid jacket.

*A timid  
rider.*

He did not ride well, which surprised us, as, from the frequent allusions to horsemanship in his works, we expected to find him almost a Nimrod. It was evident that he had *pretensions* on this point, though he certainly was what I should call a timid rider. When his horse made a false step, which was not unfrequent, he seemed discomposed ; and when we came to any bad part of the road, he immediately checked his course and walked his horse very slowly, though there really was nothing to make even a lady nervous. Finding that I could perfectly manage (or what he called *bully*) a very highly dressed horse that I daily rode, he became extremely anxious to buy it ; asked me a thousand questions as to how I had acquired such a perfect command of it, etc. . . . As I was by no means a bold rider, we were rather amused at observing Lord Byron's opinion of my courage.<sup>1</sup>—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

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<sup>1</sup> This account differs materially from Leigh Hunt's opinion of Byron's horsemanship ; Hunt says : " He was a good rider, graceful, and kept a firm seat."

No defect existed in the formation of his limbs ; his slight infirmity was nothing but the result of weakness of one of his ankles. His habit of ever being on horseback had brought on the emaciation of his legs, as evinced by the post-mortem examination ; besides which, the best proof of this has been lately given in an English newspaper much to the following effect : “ Mrs. Wildman (the widow of the colonel who had bought Newstead) has lately given to the Naturalist Society of Nottingham several objects which had belonged to Lord Byron, and among others his boot and shoe trees. These trees are about nine inches long, narrow, and generally of a symmetrical form. They were accompanied by the following statement of Mr. Swift, bootmaker, who worked for his lordship from 1805 to 1807. . . . ‘ William Swift, bootmaker at Southwell, Nottinghamshire, having had the honor of working for Lord Byron when residing at Southwell from 1805 to 1807, asserts that these were the trees upon which his lordship’s boots and shoes were made, and that the last pair delivered was on May 10, 1807. He moreover affirms that his lordship had not a club foot, as has been said, but that both his feet were equally well formed, one, however, being an inch and a half shorter than the other. The defect was not in the foot, but in the ankle, which, being weak, caused the foot to turn out too much. To remedy this his lordship wore a very light and thin boot, which was tightly laced just under the sole, and, when a boy, he was made to wear a piece of iron with a joint at the ankle, which passed behind the leg and was tied behind the shoe. The calf of this leg was weaker

*Varying testimony as to his lameness.*



*Varying testimony as to his lameness.*

than the other, and it was the left leg. (Signed) William Swift.'” This, then, is the extent of the defect of which so much has been said, and which has been called a deformity. As to its being visible, all those who knew him assert that it was so little evident that it was even impossible to discover in which of the feet or legs the fault existed.—COUNT-ESS GUICCIOLI (“Recollections of Byron”).

The only blemish of his body . . . was the congenital malformation of his left foot and leg. The foot was deformed, and turned inwards, and the leg was smaller and shorter than the sound one. Although Lord Byron preferred attributing his lameness to the unskilful treatment of a sprained ankle, there can be little or no doubt, that he was born club-footed.—JULIUS MILLINGEN (“Memoirs of Affairs of Greece”).<sup>1</sup>

. . . It was caused by the contraction of the back sinews, which the doctors call “Tendon Achilles,” that prevented his heels resting on the ground, and compelled him to walk on the fore part of his feet; except this defect, his feet were perfect.—E. J. TRELAWNY (“Records of Shelley, Byron, etc.,” 1878).

In 1858 Trelawny said, in his “Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron:” “Both Byron’s feet were clubbed, and his legs withered to the knee—the form and features of an Apollo, with the feet and legs of a sylvan satyr.” Here, as in so many other instances, it is almost impossible to discover

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<sup>1</sup> Millingen (Julius). *Memoirs of the Affairs of Greece, with Anecdotes of Lord Byron.* 12mo. London, 1831.



the absolute truth about Byron. The latest student of his life, Mr. John Nichol,<sup>1</sup> after remarking upon the differences in the various accounts, says: "It is certain that one of the poet's feet was, either at birth or at a very early period, so seriously clubbed or twisted as to affect his gait, and to a considerable extent his habits. It also appears that the surgical means—boots, bandages, etc.—adopted to straighten the limb, only aggravated the evil."

*Varying testimony as to his lameness.*

In his attention to his person and dress, to the becoming arrangement of his hair, and to whatever might best show off the beauty with which nature had gifted him, he manifested his anxiety to make himself pleasing to that sex, who were, from first to last, the ruling stars of his destiny. The fear of becoming, what he was naturally inclined to be, enormously fat, had induced him, from his first entrance at Cambridge, to adopt, for the purpose of reducing himself, a system of violent exercise and abstinence, together with the frequent use of warm baths. But the imbittering circumstance of his life . . . was, strange to say, the trifling deformity of his foot. By that one slight blemish (as in his moments of melancholy he persuaded himself) all the blessings that nature had showered upon him were counterbalanced. His reverend friend Mr. B., finding him one day unusually dejected, endeavored to cheer and rouse him by representing, in their brightest colors, all the various advantages with which Providence had endowed

*Regard for his personal appearance.*

<sup>1</sup> Nichol (John). Byron. 12mo. London and New York, 1860. (English Men of Letters. Ed. by J. Morley.)

*Regard for  
his personal  
appearance.*

him—and, among the greatest, that of “a mind which placed him above the rest of mankind.” “Ah, my dear friend,” said Byron mournfully, “if *this* (laying his hand on his forehead) places me above the rest of mankind, *that* (pointing to his foot) places me far, far below them.”—T. MOORE (“Life of Byron”).

*Foppish-  
ness.*

No *petit maître* could pay more sedulous attention than he did to external appearance, or consult with more complacency the looking-glass. Even when *en negligé* he studied the nature of the postures he assumed as attentively as if he had been sitting for his picture; and so much value did he attach to the whiteness of his hands, that, in order not to suffer “the winds of heaven to visit them too roughly,” he constantly, and even within doors, wore gloves.—JULIUS MILLINGEN (“Memoirs of Affairs of Greece”).

*Effeminate  
and mascu-  
line traits.*

He had a delicate white hand, of which he was proud; and he attracted attention to it by rings. He thought a hand of this description almost the only mark remaining nowadays of a gentleman. . . . He often appeared holding a handkerchief, upon which his jewelled fingers lay imbedded, as in a picture. He was fond of fine linen as a Quaker; and had the remnant of his hair oiled and trimmed with all the anxiety of a Sardanapalus. The visible character to which this effeminacy gave rise, appears to have indicated itself as early as his travels in the Levant, where the Grand Signior is said to have taken him for a woman. But

he had tastes of a more masculine description. He was fond of swimming to the last, and used to push out to a good distance in the Gulf of Genoa.<sup>1</sup>—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

*Effeminate  
and mascu-  
line traits.*

Nothing gratifies him so much as being told that he grows thin. This fancy of his is pushed to an almost childish extent; and he frequently asks, "Don't you think I get thinner?" or "Did you ever see any person so thin as I am, who was not ill?" He says he is sure no one could recollect him were he to go to England at present, and seems to enjoy this thought very much.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

*Dread of  
corpulence.*

I frequently heard him say, "I especially dread, in this world, two things, to which I have reason to believe I am equally predisposed—growing fat and growing mad; and it would be difficult for me to decide, were I forced to make a choice, which of these conditions I would choose in preference." To avoid corpulence, not satisfied with eating . . . sparingly, and renouncing the use of every kind of food that he deemed nourishing, he had recourse almost daily to strong drastic pills, . . . and if he observed the slightest increase in the size of his wrists or waist, which he measured with scrupulous exactness every morning, he immediately sought to reduce it by taking a large dose of Epsom salts,

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<sup>1</sup> Byron was also fond of boxing, and often tried his skill with Jackson, a professional pugilist.

besides the usual pills.—JULIUS MILLINGEN (“Memoirs of Affairs of Greece”).

*Diet.*

His system of diet here <sup>1</sup> was regulated by an abstinence almost incredible. A thin slice of bread, with tea, at breakfast—a light, vegetable dinner, with a bottle or two of Seltzer water, tinged with vin de Grave, and in the evening a cup of green tea, without milk or sugar, formed the whole of his sustenance. The pangs of hunger he appeased by privately chewing tobacco and smoking cigars.<sup>2</sup>—T. MOORE (“Life of Byron”).

*Conflicting  
testimony as  
to his use of  
tobacco.*

*Voice and  
conversa-  
tion.*

His voice and accent are peculiarly agreeable, but effeminate,<sup>3</sup> clear, harmonious, and so distinct that though his general tone in speaking is rather low than high, not a word is lost.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“Conversations of Lord Byron”).

*Conversa-  
tion.*

Captain Medwin . . . tells us that the noble poet’s “voice had a flexibility, a variety in its tones, a power and a pathos beyond any I have heard.” . . . But from all I ever heard of it, I should form a very different judgment. His voice, as far

<sup>1</sup> At Diodati, in 1816.

<sup>2</sup> Here again we meet with conflicting testimony, for Trelawny says, “In truth Byron never smoked either pipe or cigar.” It is very difficult, however, to reconcile this statement with the allusions to smoking which are to be found in Byron’s poems. For further particulars about his diet, see pp. 34, 35.

<sup>3</sup> Lady Hester Stanhope told Alexander William Kinglake that Byron had an affected manner of speaking and a slight lisp. Kinglake records this in “Eöthen.”

as I was acquainted with it, though not incapable of loudness, nor unmelodious in its deeper tones, was confined. He made an effort when he threw it out. The sound of it in ordinary, except when he laughed, was pretty and lugubrious. He spoke inwardly, and slurred over his syllables, perhaps in order to hide the *burr*. In short, it was as much the reverse of anything various and powerful, as his enunciation was of anything articulate. . . . Lord Byron had no conversation, properly speaking. He could not interchange ideas or information with you, as a man of letters is expected to do. His thoughts required the concentration of silence and study to bring them to a head, and they deposited the amount in the shape of a stanza. His acquaintance with books was very circumscribed. The same personal experience, however, upon which he very properly drew for his authorship, might have rendered him a companion more interesting by far than men who could talk better; and the great reason why his conversation disappointed you was, not that he had not anything to talk about, but that he was haunted by a perpetual affectation, and could not talk sincerely. It was by fits only that he spoke with any gravity, or made his extraordinary disclosures; and at no time did you know well what to believe. The rest was all quip and crank, not of the pleasantest kind, and equally distant from simplicity or wit. The best thing to say of it was, that he knew playfulness to be consistent with greatness; and the worst, that he thought everything in him was great, even to his vulgarities. Mr. Shelley said of him, that he never

*Conversa-  
tion.*

Conversa-  
tion.

made you laugh to your own content . . . It is not to be concluded, that his jokes were not now and then very happy, or that admirers of his lordship, who paid him visits, did not often go away more admiring. I am speaking of his conversation in general, and of the impression it made upon you, compared with what was to be expected from a man of wit and experience.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

Byron is a great talker ; his flippancy ceases in a *tête à tête*, and he becomes sententious, abandoning himself to the subject, and seeming to think aloud, though his language has the appearance of stiffness, and is quite opposed to the trifling chit-chat that he enters into when in general society. I attribute this to his having lived so much alone, as also to the desire he now professes of applying himself to prose writing. He affects a sort of Johnsonian tone, likes very much to be listened to, and seems to observe the effect he produces on his hearer. In mixed society his ambition is to appear the man of fashion ; he adopts a light tone of badinage and persiflage that does not sit gracefully on him, but is always anxious to turn the subject to his own personal affairs, or feelings, which are either lamented with an air of melancholy, or dwelt on with playful ridicule, according to the humor he happens to be in.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

I never met with any man who shines so much in conversation. He shines the more, perhaps, for not

seeking to shine. His ideas flow without effort, without his having occasion to think. As in his letters, he is not nice about expressions or words ; there are no concealments in him, no injunctions to secrecy. He tells everything that he has thought or done without the least reserve, and as if he wished the whole world to know it ; and does not throw the slightest gloss over his errors. . . . He hates argument, and never argues for victory. He gives every one an opportunity of sharing in the conversation, and has the art of turning it to subjects that may bring out the person with whom he converses.—THOMAS MEDWIN ("Conversations of Lord Byron").<sup>1</sup>

*Conversa-  
tion.*

Report had prepared me to meet a man of peculiar habits and quick temper, and I had some doubts whether we were likely to suit each other in society. I was most agreeably disappointed in this respect. I found Lord Byron in the highest degree courteous, and even kind. We met for an hour or two almost daily in Mr. Murray's drawing-room, and found a great deal to say to each other. Our sentiments agreed a good deal, except upon the subjects of religion and politics, upon neither of which I was inclined to believe that Lord Byron entertained very fixed opinions.—SIR WALTER SCOTT (quoted in Moore's "Life of Byron").

*Conversa-  
tion and  
personal  
charm.*

Everything in his manner, person, and conversation, tended to maintain the charm which his genius

<sup>1</sup> Medwin (Thomas). Conversations of Lord Byron, Noted During a Residence at Pisa, in 1821 and 1822. 8vo. London, 1824.



*Conversational and personal charm.*

had flung around him ; and those admitted to his conversation, far from finding that the inspired poet sunk into ordinary mortality, felt themselves attached to him, not only by many noble qualities, but by the interest of a mysterious, undefined, and almost painful curiosity. — SIR WALTER SCOTT (*Quarterly Review*, October, 1816).

*An indiscreet talker*

He is an extraordinary person, *indiscreet* to a degree that is surprising, exposing his own feelings, and entering into details of those of others which ought to be sacred, with a degree of frankness as unnecessary as it is rare. Incontinence of speech is his besetting sin. He is, I am persuaded, incapable of keeping any secret, however it may concern his own honor or that of another ; and the first person with whom he found himself *tête à tête* would be made the confidant without any reference to his worthiness of the confidence or not. This indiscretion proceeds not from malice, but I should say from want of delicacy of mind.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“Conversations of Lord Byron”).

It is strange to see the perfect *abandon* with which he converses to recent acquaintances, on subjects which even friends would think too delicate for discussion. . . . Byron is perfectly at his ease in society, and generally makes others so, except when he enters into family details, which places persons of any refinement in a painful position.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ( “Idler in Italy”).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Blessington (Margaret P. G., *Countess of*). The Idler in Italy. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1839.



He tells a story remarkably well, mimics the manner of the persons he describes very successfully, and has a true comic vein when he is disposed to indulge it.<sup>1</sup>—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Idler in Italy").

*A good  
mimic.*

Could some of the persons who believe him to be their friend, hear with what unction he mimics their peculiarities, unfolds their secrets, displays their defects, and ridicules their vanity, they would not feel gratified by, though they must acknowledge the skill of their dissector; who, by the accuracy of his remarks and imitations, proves that he has studied his subjects *con amore*.<sup>2</sup>—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Idler in Italy").

To those who only know Lord Byron as an author, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to convey a just impression of him as a man. In him the elements of good and evil were so strongly mixed, that an error could not be detected that was not allied to some good quality; and his fine qualities, and they were many, could hardly be separated from the faults that sullied them. . . . A nearly daily intercourse of ten weeks with Byron left the impression on my mind, that if an extraordinary quickness of perception prevented his passing over the errors of those with whom he came in contact, and a natural incontinence of speech betrayed him into an

*An apology  
for his cen-  
soriousness.*

<sup>1</sup> Several persons have recorded the fact that Byron was a good mimic, and gave excellent imitations of the various actors of his day.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 59-62.

*An apology  
for his cen-  
soriousness.*

exposure of them, a candor and good nature, quite as remarkable, often led him to enumerate their virtues, and to draw attention to them. . . . There was no premeditated malignity in Byron's nature; though constantly in the habit of exposing the follies and vanities of his friends, I never heard him blacken their reputations, and I never felt an unfavorable impression from any of the censures he bestowed, because I saw they were aimed at follies, and not character. . . . The more I see of Byron, the more I am convinced that all he says and does should be judged more leniently than the sayings and doings of others—as his proceed from the impulse of the moment, and never from premeditated malice. He cannot resist expressing whatever comes into his mind; and the least shade of the ridiculous is seized by him at a glance, and portrayed with a facility and felicity that must encourage the propensity to ridicule, which is inherent in him. All the malice of his nature has lodged itself on his lips and the fingers of his right hand—for there is none I am persuaded to be found in his heart, which has more of good than most people give him credit for, except those who have lived with him on habits of intimacy.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

*A lover of  
storms.*

In 1822 the Countess of Blessington talked with a boatman at Geneva, who had been employed by Byron. This man told her, as she states in her "Idler in Italy," that Byron "passed whole nights on the lake, always selecting the most boisterous weather for such expeditions;" and he said, "I

never saw a rough evening set in . . . without being sure that he would send for me ; and the higher the wind, and the more agitated the lake, the more he enjoyed it. We have often remained out eighteen hours at a time, and in very bad weather."

*A lover of storms.*

Such effect had the passionate energy of Kean's acting on his mind, that once, in seeing him play Sir Giles Overreach, he was so affected as to be seized with a sort of convulsive fit ; and we shall find him some years after, in Italy, when the representation of Alfieri's tragedy of Mirra had agitated him in the same violent manner, comparing the two instances as the only ones in his life when "anything under reality" had been able to move him so powerfully.—T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*Powerfully affected by Kean's acting.*

His fondness for dogs and other animals is often mentioned by those who knew him intimately. In a letter from Ravenna, in 1821, Shelley writes : "Lord B.'s establishment consists, besides servants, of ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, an eagle, a crow, and a falcon ; and all these, except the horses, walk about the house, which every now and then resounds with their unarbitrated quarrels. . . . After I have sealed my letter, I find that my enumeration of the animals in this Circæan Palace was defective, and that in a material point. I have just met on the grand staircase five peacocks, two guinea-hens, and an Egyptian crane. I wonder who all these animals were before they were changed into these shapes."

*Fondness for animals.*

—(Prose Works of P. B. Shelley, ed. by H. B. Forman, vol. 4, p. 222.)<sup>1</sup>

*A little  
supper.*

The supper . . . took place at Watier's ;  
. . . and as it may convey some idea of his irregular mode of diet, and thus account in part for the frequent derangement of his health, I shall here attempt, from recollection, a description of the supper on this occasion. . . . Having taken upon me to order the repast, and knowing that Lord Byron, for the last two days, had done nothing towards sustenance, beyond eating a few biscuits, and (to appease appetite) chewing mastic, I desired that we should have a good supply of, at least, two kinds of fish. My companion, however, confined himself to lobsters, and of these finished two or three to his own share,—interposing, some two or three times, a small liquer-glass of strong white brandy, sometimes a tumbler of very hot water, and then pure brandy again, to the amount of near half a dozen of the latter, without which, alternately with the hot water, he appeared to think the lobster could not be digested. After this we had claret, of which, having despatched two bottles between us, at about four o'clock in the morning we parted.—T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*Unable to  
taste.*

Byron had no palate. Trelawny could mix his gin-and-water as weak as he chose without Byron's taking any notice of it whatever ; once he

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley (Percy B.). Works in Verse and Prose. Ed. by H. B. Forman. 8 vols., 8vo. London, 1880.

purposely missed out the gin altogether, and Byron seemed struck by it only after several sips.—W. M. ROSSETTI ("Talks with Trelawny," *Athenæum*, July 15, 1882).

*Unable to  
taste.*

Rev. Alexander Dyce, in his volume of Rogers' table-talk (published anonymously),<sup>1</sup> gives this story, as told by Rogers: "Neither Moore nor myself had ever seen Byron when it was settled that he should dine at my house to meet Moore: nor was he known by sight to Campbell, who, happening to call upon me that morning, consented to join the party.

*A dinner  
with  
Rogers.*

. . . When we sat down to dinner I asked Byron if he would take soup? 'No; he never took soup.'—Would he take some fish? 'No; he never took fish.' Presently I asked him if he would eat some mutton? 'No; he never ate mutton.' I then asked him if he would take a glass of wine? 'No; he never tasted wine.'—It was now necessary to inquire what he *did* eat and drink; and the answer was, 'Nothing but hard biscuits and soda-water.' Unfortunately, neither hard biscuits nor soda-water were at hand; and he dined upon potatoes bruised down on his plate and drenched with vinegar. . . . Some days after, meeting Hobhouse, I said to him, 'How long will Lord Byron persevere in his present diet?' He replied, 'Just as long as you continue to notice it.' I did not then know, what I now know to be a fact,—that Byron, after leaving my house, had gone to a club in St. James' Street, and eaten a hearty meat-supper."

<sup>1</sup> Dyce (Rev. Alexander). *Recollections of the Table-talk of Samuel Rogers.* 12mo. London, 1856.

*Melancholy  
and sus-  
picious.*

He was often melancholy, almost gloomy. When I observed him in this humor I used either to wait till it went off of its own accord, or till some natural and easy mode occurred of leading him into conversation, when the shadows almost always left his countenance, like the mist arising from a landscape. I think I also remarked in his temper starts of suspicion, when he seemed to pause and consider whether there had not been a secret and perhaps offensive meaning in something that was said to him. In this case I also judged it best to let his mind, like a troubled spring, work itself clear, which it did in a minute or two. A downright steadiness of manner was the way to his good opinion. Will Rose, looking by accident at his feet, saw him scowling furiously ; but on his showing no consciousness, his lordship resumed his easy manner.—SIR WALTER SCOTT (quoted in Moore's "Life of Byron").

Byron is of a very suspicious nature ; he dreads imposition on all points, declares that he forgoes many things, from the fear of being cheated in the purchase, and is afraid to give way to the natural impulses of his character, lest he should be duped or mocked.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

*Convivial-  
ity.*

It is a credit to my noble acquaintance, that he was by far the pleasantest when he had got wine in his head. . . . When in his cups, which was not often, nor immoderately, he was inclined to be tender ; but not weakly so, nor lachrymose. I know

not how it might have been with everybody, but he paid me the compliment of being excited to his very best feelings ; and when I rose late to go away, he would hold me down, and say with a look of entreaty, "Not yet." Then it was that I seemed to talk with the proper natural Byron as he ought to have been ; . . . Next morning it was all gone. His intimacy with the worst part of mankind had got him again in its chilling crust ; and nothing remained but to despair and joke. In wine he would volunteer an imitation of somebody, generally of Incedon. He was not a good mimic in the detail, but he could give a lively broad sketch ; and over his cups his imitations were good-natured, which was seldom the case at other times.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

*Convivial-  
ity.*

William Bankes talked with much affection of Byron ; his sensitiveness to criticism. When Bankes was with him in Venice, he told Byron of some Mr. S—— (then also in Venice, and, as Byron said, "a salt fish seller") who declared that *Don Juan* was all "Grub Street." The effect of this on Byron was so great, that Bankes is of opinion (as indeed, Byron himself told him) that it stopped *Don Juan* for some time. "That damned Mr. S——," he used to say. . . . He also showed Bankes one day a drawer containing the MS. of *Don Juan*, saying : "Look, here is Mr. S——'s Grub Street."—THOMAS MOORE ("Journal").<sup>1</sup>

*Sensitive-  
ness to  
criticism.*

<sup>1</sup> Moore (Thomas). *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence.* Edited by Lord John Russell. 8 vols., 8vo. London, 1853-56.

*Dreads to be  
thought sen-  
timental.*

The anxiety with which, at all periods of his life, but particularly at the present,<sup>1</sup> he sought to repel the notion that, except when under the actual inspiration of writing, he was at all influenced by poetical associations, very frequently displayed itself. "You must have been highly gratified," said a gentleman to him, "by the classical remains and recollections which you met with in your visit to Ithaca."—"You quite mistake me," answered Lord Byron—"I have no poetical humbug about me; I am too old for that. Ideas of that sort are confined to rhyme."—T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*Affectation  
of insensi-  
bility.*

Lord Byron was our cicerone, and took us to Nervi, one of the prettiest rides imaginable and commanding a fine view of the sea. He pointed out the spots whence the views were the most beautiful, but with a coldness of expression that was remarkable. Observing that I smiled at this insensibility, he too smiled, and said, "I suppose you expected me to explode into some enthusiastic exclamations on the sea, the scenery, etc., such as poets indulge in, or rather are supposed to indulge in; but the truth is, I hate cant of every kind, and the cant of the love of nature as much as any other." So to avoid the appearance of one affectation he assumes another, that of *not* admiring. He especially eschews every symptom indicative of his poetical feelings; yet, nevertheless, they break out continually in various ways when he is off his guard.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Idler in Italy").

<sup>1</sup> In 1823, during his Grecian campaign.



Perceiving, as he walked the deck, a small yathagan, or Turkish dagger, on one of the benches, he took it up, unsheathed it, and having stood for a few moments contemplating the blade, was heard to say, in an under voice, "I should like to know how a person feels after committing a murder!" —T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*Melodramatic posing.*

Other testimony as to Byron's tendency to be melodramatic comes from two artists, the sculptor, Thorwaldsen, and the painter, W. E. West. Hans Christian Andersen, in his "Story of My Life,"<sup>1</sup> reports a story told him by Thorwaldsen, as follows: "When I was about to make Byron's statue, he placed himself just opposite to me, and began immediately to assume quite another countenance to what was customary to him. 'Will you not sit still?' said I; 'but you must not make these faces.' 'It is my expression,' said Byron. 'Indeed?' said I, and then I made him as I wished, and everybody said, when it was finished, that I had hit the likeness. When Byron, however, saw it, he said, 'It does not resemble me at all; I look more unhappy!'" West, who painted his portrait, says: "He was a bad sitter; he assumed a countenance that did not belong to him, as though he were thinking of a frontispiece for *Childe Harold*."

Byron had one pre-eminent fault, a fault which must be considered as deeply criminal by every one

*Self-slancer.*

<sup>1</sup> Andersen (Hans Christian). Story of My Life to 1867. 16mo. New York, 1871.

*Self-slander.*

who does not, as I do, believe it to have resulted from monomania. He had a morbid love of a bad reputation. There was hardly an offence of which he would not, with perfect indifference accuse himself. An old school-fellow, who met him on the Continent, told me that he would continually write paragraphs against himself in the foreign journals, and delight in their republication by the English newspapers as in the success of a practical joke.

. . . If I could remember, and were willing to repeat, the various misdoings which I have from time to time heard him attribute to himself, I could fill a volume. But I never believed them. I very soon became aware of this strange idiosyncrasy. It puzzled me to account for it; but there it was—a sort of diseased and distorted vanity.

The same eccentric spirit would induce him to report things which were false with regard to his family, which anybody else would have concealed, though true. He told me more than once that his father was insane and killed himself. I shall never forget the manner in which he first told me this. While washing his hands, and singing a gay Neapolitan air, he stopped, looked round at me, and said, "There always was a madness in the family." Then after continuing his washing and his song, as if speaking of a matter of the slightest indifference, "My father cut his throat." . . . In this instance I had no doubt that the fact was as he related it, but in speaking of it a few years since to an old lady in whom I had perfect confidence, she assured me that it was not so. . . .

Except this love of an ill name . . . I have

*"There always was a madness in the family."*

no personal knowledge whatever of any evil act or evil disposition of Lord Byron's. I once said this to a gentleman, who was well acquainted with Lord Byron's London life. He expressed himself astonished at what I said. "Well," I replied, "do you know any harm of him but what he told you himself?" "Oh, yes, a hundred things!" "I don't want you to tell me a hundred things, I shall be content with one." Here the conversation was interrupted. We were at dinner—there was a large party, and the subject was again renewed at table. But afterwards, in the drawing-room, Mr. Drury came up to me and said, "I have been thinking of what you were saying at dinner. I do *not* know any harm of Byron but what he has told me of himself." —WILLIAM HARNESS (L'Estrange's "Life of Harness").<sup>1</sup>

*"There always was a madness in the family."*

To such a perverse length . . . did he carry this fancy for self-defamation, that if (as sometimes, in his moments of gloom, he persuaded himself), there was any tendency to derangement in his mental constitution, on this point alone could it be pronounced to have manifested itself. In the early part of my acquaintance with him, when he most gave way to this humor, . . . I have known him more than once, as we have sat together after dinner, and he was, at the time, perhaps, a little under the influence of wine, to fall seriously into this sort of dark and self-accusing mood, and throw

*Fond of a bad reputation.*

<sup>1</sup> L'Estrange (Rev. A. G.). The Literary Life of the Rev. William Harness. London, 1870.

*Fond of a  
bad reputa-  
tion.*

out hints of his past life with an air of gloom and mystery designed evidently to awaken curiosity and interest.—T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*Love of  
mystifica-  
tion.*

It is difficult to judge when Lord Byron is serious or not. He has a habit of mystifying, that might impose upon many, but that can be detected by examining his physiognomy; for a sort of mock gravity, now and then broken by a malicious smile, betrays when he is speaking for effect, and not giving utterance to his real sentiments. . . . The love of mystification is so strong in Byron, that he is continually letting drop mysterious hints of events in his past life: as if to excite curiosity, he assumes, on those occasions, a look and air suited to the insinuation conveyed; if it has excited the curiosity of his hearers, he is satisfied, looks still more mysterious, and changes the subject; but if it fails to rouse curiosity, he becomes evidently discomposed and sulky, stealing sly glances at the person he had been endeavoring to mystify, to observe the effect he has produced. On such occasions I have looked at him a little maliciously, and laughed, without asking a single question; and I have often succeeded in making him laugh too at those mystifications, *manquée* as I called them. . . . I am sure that if ten individuals undertook the task of describing Byron, no two, of the ten, would agree in their verdict respecting him, or convey any portrait that resembled the other, and yet the description of each might be correct, according to his or her received opinion; but the truth is, the chameleon-like character or manner of Byron ren-

ders it difficult to portray him ; and the pleasure he seems to take in misleading his associates in their estimate of him increases the difficulty of the task. This extraordinary fancy of his has so often struck me, that I expect to see all the persons who have lived with him giving portraits, each unlike the other, and yet all bearing a resemblance to the original at some one time.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

*Love of  
mystifica-  
tion.*

He declares that, in addition to his other failings, avarice is now established. This new vice, like all the others he attributes to himself, he talks of as one would name those of an acquaintance, in a sort of deprecating, yet half mocking tone ; as much as to say, you see I know all my faults better than you do, though I don't choose to correct them : indeed, it has often occurred to me, that he brings forward his defects, as if in anticipation of some one else exposing them, which he would not like ; as, though he affects the contrary, he is jealous of being found fault with, and shows it in a thousand ways. He affects to dislike hearing his works praised or referred to ; I say affects, because I am sure the dislike is not real or natural, as he who loves praise, as Byron evidently does, in other things, cannot dislike it for that in which he must be conscious it is deserved. He refers to his feats in horsemanship, shooting at a mark, and swimming, in a way that proves he likes to be complimented on them ; and nothing appears to give him more satisfaction than being considered a man of fashion, who had great success in fashionable society in London, when he resided

*Confessing  
vices.  
Courting  
admiration*

there.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“Conversations of Lord Byron”).

*Fickleness  
and insta-  
bility.*

Byron seems to take a peculiar pleasure in ridiculing sentiment and romantic feelings ; and yet the day after will betray both, to an extent that appears impossible to be sincere, to those who had heard his previous sarcasms : that he is sincere, is evident, as his eyes fill with tears, his voice becomes tremulous, and his whole manner evinces that he feels what he says. All this appears so inconsistent, that it destroys sympathy, or if it does not quite do that, it makes one angry with oneself for giving way to it for one who is never for two days of the same way of thinking, or at least expressing himself. He talks for effect, likes to excite astonishment, and certainly destroys in the minds of his auditors all confidence in his stability of character. This must, I am certain, be felt by all who have lived much in his society ; and the impression is not satisfactory. . . . There are days when he excites so strong an interest and sympathy, by showing such undoubtable proofs of good feeling, that every previous impression to his disadvantage fades away, and one is vexed with oneself for ever having harbored them. But alas ! “the morrow comes,” and he is no longer the same being. Some disagreeable letter, review, or new example of the slanders with which he has been for years assailed, changes the whole current of his feelings—renders him reckless, Sardonian, and as unlike the Byron of the day before as if they had nothing in common,—nay, he seems determined to efface any good impression he might have

made, and appears angry with himself for having yielded to the kindly feelings that gave birth to it. . . . This instability of opinion, or expression of opinion, of Byron, destroys all confidence in him, and precludes the possibility of those, who live much in his society, feeling that sentiment of confiding security in him, without which a real regard cannot subsist.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

*Fickleness  
and instabil-  
ity.*

There was . . . about this extraordinary young nobleman<sup>1</sup> something that, even while he was agreeable, checked all confidence; for though his temper was not decidedly bad, it was skinless and capricious, and I was not always in a humor to accord that indulgence which he constantly required. Of all the men I have ever known, he had the least equanimity, and yet in his felicitous moments he was singularly amusing, often interesting. To me there was an agreeable excitement frequently produced by his conversation, but he claimed more deference than I was disposed to grant.—JOHN GALT ("Autobiography").<sup>2</sup>

*Irritable  
and exact-  
ing.*

Few men possessed more companionable qualities than Lord Byron did occasionally: and seen at intervals, in those felicitous moments, I imagine it would have been difficult to have said, that a more interesting companion had been previously met with. But he was not always in that fascinating

*No depend-  
ence to be  
placed upon  
his moods.*

<sup>1</sup> Byron, when thus described, was about twenty-three years old.

<sup>2</sup> Galt (John). Autobiography. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1833.

*No dependence to be placed upon his moods.*

state of pleasantry : he was as often otherwise ; and no two individuals could be more distinct from each other than Byron in his gayety and his gloom. This antithesis was the great cause of that diversity of opinion concerning him, which has so much divided his friends and adversaries.—JOHN GALT (“Life of Byron”).

Those only, who lived for some time with him, could believe that a man’s temper, Proteus like, was capable of assuming so many shapes. It may literally be said, that at different hours of the day he metamorphosed himself into four or more individuals, each possessed of the most opposite qualities. . . . In the course of the day he might become the most morose, and the most gay ; and the most melancholy, and the most frolicsome ; the most generous, and the most penurious ; the most benevolent, and the most misanthropic ; . . . the most gentle being in existence, and the most irascible.—JULIUS MILLINGEN (“Memoirs of Affairs of Greece”).

*Fondness for arms.*

Moore tells us that Byron constantly had arms of some kind about him ; it was his practice, he says, “when quite a boy, to carry at all times small loaded pistols in his waistcoat pockets.” Elsewhere Moore says : “Such a passion, indeed, had he for arms of every description, that there generally lay a small sword by the side of his bed, with which he used to amuse himself by thrusting it through his bed-hangings.” The Countess of Blessington says, in her “Idler in Italy,” that a boatman at Geneva, employed by Byron, told her that the poet never



entered his boat without a case of pistols, which he always kept by him. Byron was very fond of shooting at a mark, and was a capital shot.

*Fondness  
for arms.*

Byron has little taste for the fine arts ; and when they are the subject of conversation, betrays an ignorance very surprising in a man who has travelled so much. He says that he *feels* art, while others *prate* about it ; but his neglect of the beautiful specimens of it here goes far to prove the contrary.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“Idler in Italy”).

*Indiffer-  
ence to the  
fine arts.*

Lord Byron once wrote me a letter . . . in which he pronounced “Reubens” to be “a dauber.” He knew so little of pictures, that you see he had not even read enough about the very names of the artists to be able to spell them.—LEIGH HUNT (extract from a letter).

I should say that a bad and vulgar taste predominated in all Byron's equipments, whether in dress or in furniture. I saw his bed at Genoa, when I passed through in 1826, and it certainly was the most gaudily vulgar thing I ever saw ; the curtains in the worst taste, and the cornice having his family motto, “Crede Byron,” surmounted by baronial coronets. His carriages and his livery were in the same bad taste, having an affectation of finery, but *mesquin* in the details, and tawdry in the *ensemble* ; and it was evident that he piqued himself on them, by the complacency with which they were referred to. These trifles are touched upon as being characteristic of the man, and would have been passed

*Vulgar  
taste.*

*Vulgar  
taste.*

by, as unworthy of notice, had he not shown that they occupied a considerable portion of his attention. He has even asked us if they were not rich and handsome, and then remarked that no wonder they were so, as they had cost him a great deal of money.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“Conversations of Lord Byron”).

*Pride of  
rank.*

Byron came to see us to-day, and appeared extremely discomposed ; after half an hour's conversation on indifferent subjects, he at length broke out with, “Only fancy my receiving a tragedy to-day dedicated as follows—‘From George —— to George Byron!’ This is being cool with a vengeance. I never was more provoked. How stupid, how ignorant, to pass over my rank!” . . . Were he but sensible how much the *Lord* is overlooked in the *Poet* he would be less vain of his rank ; but as it is, this vanity is very prominent, and resembles more the pride of a *parvenu*, than the calm dignity of an ancient aristocrat. It is also evident that he attaches importance to the appendages of rank and station. The trappings of luxury, to which a short use accustoms every one, seem to please him ; he observes, nay, comments upon them, and oh ! mortifying conclusion, appears at least for the moment to think more highly of their possessors. As his own mode of life is so extremely simple, this seems the more extraordinary ; but everything in him is contradictory and extraordinary.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“Conversations of Lord Byron”).

One day that Byron dined with us, his chasseur,

while we were at table, demanded to speak with him : he left the room, and returned in a few minutes in a state of violent agitation, pale with anger, and looking as I had never before seen him look, though I had often seen him angry. He told us that his servant had come to tell him that he must pass the gate of Genoa (his house being outside the town) before half past ten o'clock, as orders were given that no one was to be allowed to pass after. This order, which had no personal reference to him, he conceived to be expressly levelled at him, and it rendered him furious : he seized a pen, and commenced a letter to our minister—tore two or three letters one after the other, before he had written one to his satisfaction ; and, in short, betrayed such ungovernable rage, as to astonish all who were present ; he seemed very much disposed to enter into a personal contest with the authorities ; and we had some difficulty in persuading him to leave the business wholly in the hands of Mr. Hill, the English Minister, who would arrange it much better.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“Conversations of Lord Byron”).

*Unreasonable rage.*

Moore tells us that on one occasion “in a fit of vexation and rage . . . he furiously dashed his watch, a favorite old watch which had been his companion since boyhood, upon the hearth, and ground it to pieces among the ashes with the poker.”<sup>1</sup>

*Destroying his watch.*

<sup>1</sup> Trelawny, in an interview reported in the *Whitehall Review*, in 1880, said that he did not think that Byron ever wore a watch.

*Flippancy.*

I had expected to find him a dignified, cold, reserved, and haughty person, resembling those mysterious personages he so loves to paint in his works, and with whom he has been so often identified by the good-natured world ; but nothing can be more different ; for were I to point out the prominent defect of Lord Byron, I should say it was flippancy, and a total want of that natural self-possession and dignity which ought to characterize a man of birth and education.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“ Conversations of Lord Byron ”).

*At Venice  
in 1818.*

Occasionally, indeed, the fervor of the poet warmed his expression, and always the fire of genius kindled his eye ; but, in general, an affectation of fashion pervaded his manner, and the *insouciance* of satiety spread a languor over his conversation. He was destitute of that simplicity of thought and manner which is the attendant of the highest intellect, and which was so conspicuous in Scott. He was always aiming at effect : and the effect he desired was rather that of fashion than of genius ; he sought rather to astonish than impress. He seemed *blasé* with every enjoyment of life, affected rather the successful *roué* than the great poet, and deprecated beyond everything the cant of morality. The impression he wished to leave on the mind was that of a man who had tasted to the dregs of all the enjoyments of life, and above all of high life, and thought everything else mere balderdash and affectation.—SIR A. ALISON (“ Autobiography ”).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alison (Sir Archibald). Some Account of my Life and Writings. An Autobiography. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1883.

His superstition was remarkable. I do not mean in the ordinary sense, because it was superstition, but because it was petty and old-womanish. He believed in the ill-luck of Fridays, and was seriously disconcerted if anything was to be done on that frightful day of the week. Had he been a Roman, he would have startled at crows, while he made a jest of augurs.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

*Supersti-  
tion.*

He is extremely superstitious, and seems offended with those who cannot, or will not, partake this weakness. He has frequently touched on this subject, and tauntingly observed to me, that I must believe myself wiser than him, because I was not superstitious. . . . Byron is, I believe, sincere in his belief in supernatural appearances ; he assumes a grave and mysterious air when he talks on the subject, which he is fond of doing. . . . He is also superstitious about days, and other trifling things, believes in lucky and unlucky days, dislikes undertaking anything on a Friday, helping or being helped to salt at table, spilling salt or oil, letting bread fall, and breaking mirrors ; in short he gives way to a thousand fantastical notions, that prove that even *l'esprit le plus fort* has its weak side.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

Went on the water in the evening. Byron was much inclined to accompany us, but when we were about to embark, a superstitious presentiment induced him to give up the water party ; which set us all laughing at him, which he bore very well, al-

*Instances of  
his super-  
stition.*

*Instances of  
his super-  
stition.*

though he half smiled and said, "No, no, good folk, you shall not laugh me out of my superstition, even though you may think me a fool for it." <sup>1</sup>—  
COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Idler in Italy").

*Niggardli-  
ness.*

All that was now left of our Pisan circle established themselves at Albano<sup>2</sup>—Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Mrs. Shelley. I took up my quarters in the city of palaces. The fine spirit that had animated and held us together was gone! Left to our own devices, we degenerated apace. Shelley's solidity had checked Byron's flippancy, and induced him occasionally to act justly, and talk seriously; now he seemed more sordid and selfish than ever. He behaved shabbily to Mrs. Shelley; I might use a harsher epithet. In all the transactions between Shelley and Byron in which expenses had occurred, and there were many, the former, as was his custom, had paid all, the latter promising to repay; but as no one ever repaid Shelley, Byron did not see the necessity of his setting the example; and now that Mrs. Shelley was left destitute by her husband's death, Byron did nothing for her. He regretted this when too late, for in our voyage to Greece, he alluded to Shelley, saying, "Tre, you did what I should have done, let us square accounts to-morrow; I must pay my debts." I merely observed, "Money is of no use at sea, and when you get on shore, you

<sup>1</sup> Lady Blessington also tells of his having given her a pin, and asked her to return it to him the next day, because it was unlucky to give anything with a sharp point. She returned it, and he gave her a chain instead.

<sup>2</sup> After Shelley's death.

will find you have none to spare ;" he probably thought so too, for he said nothing more on the subject.—E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron, etc.").

*Niggardliness.*

In speaking of the foolish charge of avarice brought against Lord Byron by some who resented thus his not suffering them to impose on his generosity, Colonel Napier says, "I never knew a single instance of it while he was here.<sup>1</sup> I saw only a judicious generosity in all that he did. He would not allow himself to be *robbed*, but he gave profusely when he thought he was doing good. . . . He gave a vast deal of money to the Greeks in various ways." —T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*Witnesses disagree as to his liberality and meanness.*

It is undoubtedly true that Byron was often generous to a lavish degree. He was particularly kind to his servants, and succeeded in winning and retaining their devotion. The varying testimony upon this point is but another illustration of the difficulties which the student of Byron's life meets at every step.

May 22, 1823. We have purchased Byron's yacht, the Bolivar. . . . We agreed to leave the nomination of the price to Mr. Barry, but Byron contended for a larger sum than that gentleman thought it worth. The poet is certainly fond of money, and this growing passion displays itself on many occasions. He has so repeatedly and earnestly begged me to let him have my horse Mame-

*Two bargains.*

<sup>1</sup> In Greece.

*Two  
bargains.*

luke to take to Greece . . . that I have, although very unwilling to part from him, consented.

23d. A letter from Byron, saying that he cannot afford to give more than eighty pounds for Mameluke. I paid a hundred guineas, and would rather lose two hundred than part with him. How strange, to beg and entreat to have the horse resigned to him, and then name a less price than he cost !—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Idler in Italy").

*In fashion-  
able society.*

I happened to be in London when Lord Byron's fame was reaching its height, and saw much of him in society. . . . Though he was far from being a great or ambitious talker, his presence at this time made the fortune of any dinner or drawing-room party for which it could be obtained ; and was always known by a crowd gathered round him, the female portion generally predominating. I have seen many of these *epidemic* impulses of fashion in London society, but none more marked than this. There was a certain haughtiness or seeming indifference in his manner of receiving the homage tendered him, which did not however prevent him from resenting its withdrawal—an inconsistency not limited to the case of Lord Byron.<sup>1</sup> Though brought into frequent intercourse by our common travels in the East, my intimacy with him went little beyond this. He was not a man with whom it was easy to cultivate friendship. He had that double or conflicting nature, well pictured by Dante, which

<sup>1</sup> See p. 126.



rendered difficult any close or continued relations with him.—SIR HENRY HOLLAND (“Recollections”).<sup>1</sup>

Byron, at first, had been more eager than Shelley for Leigh Hunt's arrival in Italy to edit and contribute to the proposed new Review, and so continued until his English correspondents had worked on his fears. They did not oppose, for they knew his temper too well, but artfully insinuated that he was jeopardizing his fame and fortune, etc., etc. Shelley found Byron so irritable, so shuffling and equivocating, whilst talking with him on the fulfilment of his promises to Leigh Hunt,—that, but for imperilling Hunt's prospects, Shelley's intercourse with Byron would have abruptly terminated.—E. J. TRELAWNY (“Records of Shelley, Byron,” etc.).

*Treatment  
of  
Leigh Hunt.*

Byron talked to-day of Leigh Hunt, regretted his ever having embarked in the *Liberal*, and said that it had drawn a nest of hornets on him; but expressed a very good opinion of the talents and principle of Mr. Hunt, though, as he said, “our tastes are so opposite, that we are totally unsuited to each other.” . . . I can perceive that he wishes Mr. Hunt and his family away. It appears to me that Byron is a person who, without reflection, would form engagements which, when condemned by his friends or advisers, he would gladly get out of without considering the means, or, at least, without reflecting on the humiliation such a desertion must

*Relations  
with  
Leigh Hunt.*

<sup>1</sup> Holland (Sir Henry). *Recollections of Past Life*. 8vo. London, 1872.

*Relations  
with  
Leigh Hunt.*

inflict on the persons he had associated with him. He gives me the idea of a man, who feeling himself in such a dilemma, would become cold and ungracious to the parties with whom he so stood, before he had mental courage sufficient to abandon them. I may be wrong, but the whole of his manner of talking of Mr. Hunt gives me this impression, though he has not said what might be called an unkind word of him.—COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

*Life at  
Pisa.*

Our manner of life was this. Lord Byron, who used to sit up at night, writing "Don Juan" (which he did under the influence of gin and water), rose late in the morning. He breakfasted; read; lounged about, singing an air, generally out of Rossini, and in a swaggering style, though in a voice at once small and veiled; then took a bath and was dressed; and coming down-stairs, was heard, still singing, in the court-yard, out of which the garden ascended at the back of the house. The servants at the same time brought out two or three chairs. My study, a little room in a corner, with an orange tree peeping in at the window, looked upon this court-yard. I was generally at my writing when he came down, and either acknowledged his presence by getting up and saying something from the window, or he called out "Leontius!"<sup>1</sup> and came halting up to the window with some joke, or other challenge to conversation. (Readers of good sense will do me the justice of discerning where anything is spoken of in a

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<sup>1</sup> A name given to Leigh Hunt by Shelley.

*Life at  
Pisa.*

tone of objection, and where it is only brought in as requisite to the truth of the picture.) His dress, as at Monte Nero, was a nankeen jacket, with white waistcoat and trowsers, and a cap, either velvet or linen, with a shade to it. In his hand was a tobacco-box, from which he helped himself like unto a shipman. . . . We then lounged about, or sat and talked, Madame Guiccioli with her sleek tresses descending after her toilet to join us. . . .

In the course of an hour or two, being an early riser, I used to go in to dinner. Lord Byron either stayed a little longer, or went up-stairs to his books and his couch. When the heat of the day declined, we rode out, either on horseback or in a barouche, generally towards the forest. He was a good rider, graceful, and kept a firm seat. . . . Of an evening I seldom saw him. He recreated himself in the balcony, or with a book ; and at night, when I went to bed, he was just thinking of setting to work with "Don Juan."—LEIGH HUNT<sup>1</sup> ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

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<sup>1</sup> It seems only fair to state, in connection with the numerous extracts from Leigh Hunt's "Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries," that the author made a sort of apology, many years afterwards, in his autobiography, for the severity of his observations upon Byron. He says, in alluding to his former work, "I was then a young man. . . . I was agitated by grief and anger. . . . I am now free from anger. . . . I am sorry that I ever wrote a syllable respecting Lord Byron which might have been spared." The editor, however, feels fully justified in making use of these very severe criticisms ; for Leigh Hunt also says, in his autobiography, "I do not mean that I ever wrote any fictions about him. I wrote nothing which I did not feel to be true, or think so."

*Leigh  
Hunt's dis-  
section of  
Byron :  
Lack of ad-  
dress.*

If Lord Byron had been a man of address, he would have been a kinder man. He never heartily forgave either you or himself for his deficiency on this point ; and hence a good deal of his ill-temper and his carelessness of your feelings. By any means, fair or foul, he was to make up for the disadvantage ; and with all his exaction of conventional propriety from others, he could set it at naught in his own conduct in the most remarkable manner. He had an incontinence, I believe unique, in talking of his affairs, and showing you other people's letters. He would even make you presents of them ; and I have accepted one or two that they might go no farther.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

*Jealous of  
superiority  
in others.*

We have been told of authors who were jealous even of beautiful women, because they divided attention. I do not think Lord Byron would have entertained a jealousy of this sort. He would have thought the women too much occupied with himself. But he would infallibly have been jealous, had the beautiful woman been a wit, or drawn a circle round her piano-forte. With men I have seen him hold the most childish contests for superiority ; so childish that had it been possible for him to divest himself of a sense of his pretensions and public character, they would have exhibited something of the conciliating simplicity of Goldsmith. He would then lay imaginary wagers ; and in a style which you would not have looked for in high life, thrust out his chin, and give knowing, self-estimating nods of the head, half nod and half shake,

such as boys playing at chuck-farthing give, when they say, "Come, I tell you what now!" A fat dandy who came upon us at Genoa, and pretended to be younger than he was, and to wear his own hair, discomposed him for the day. He declaimed against him in so deploring a tone, and uttered the word "wig" so often, that my two eldest boys, who were in the next room, were obliged to stifle their laughter.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

*Jealous of  
superiority  
in others.*

He was anxious to show you that he possessed no Shakespeare or Milton; "because," he said, "he had been accused of borrowing from them!" He affected to doubt whether Shakespeare was so great a genius as he has been taken for, and whether fashion had not a great deal to do with it. . . . Spenser he could not read; at least he said so. All the gusto of that most poetical of the poets went with him for nothing. I lent him a volume of the "Fairy Queen," and he said he would try to like it. Next day he brought it to my study-window, and said, "Here, Hunt, here is your Spenser. I cannot see anything in him;" and he seemed anxious that I should take it out of his hands, as if he was afraid of being accused of copying so poor a writer. That he saw nothing in Spenser is not likely; but I really do not think that he saw much. Spenser was too much out of the world, and he too much in it.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

*Opinion of  
Shake-  
speare and  
Spenser.*

It has been said in a magazine, that I was always

*Weak in  
argument.*

arguing with Lord Byron. Nothing can be more untrue. I was indeed almost always differing, and to such a degree, that I was fain to keep the difference to myself. I differed so much, that I argued as little as possible. His lordship was so poor a logician, that he did not even provoke argument. When you openly differed with him, in anything like a zealous manner, the provocation was caused by something foreign to reasoning, and not pretending to it. He did not care for argument, and, what is worse, was too easily convinced at the moment, or appeared to be so, to give any zest to disputation. He gravely asked me one day, "What it was that convinced me in argument?" I said, I thought I was convinced by the strongest reasoning. "For my part," said he, "it is the last speaker that convinces me." And I believe he spoke truly; but then he was only convinced, till it was agreeable to him to be moved otherwise. He did not care for the truth. He admired only the convenient and the ornamental. He was moved to and fro, not because there was any ultimate purpose which he would give up, but solely because it was most troublesome to sit still and resist.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

*Egotism  
and vanity.*

He would make confessions of vanity, or some other fault, or of inaptitude for a particular species of writing, partly to sound what you thought of it, partly that while you gave him credit for the humility, you were to protest against the concession. All the perversity of his spoiled nature would then come into play; and it was in these, and simi-

lar perplexities, that the main difficulty of living with him consisted. If you made everything tell in his favor, as most people did, he was pleased with you for not differing with him, but then nothing was gained. The reverse would have been an affront. He lumped you with the rest; and was prepared to think as little of you in the particular, as he did of any one else. If you contested a claim, or allowed him to be in the right in a concession, he could neither argue the point nor really concede it. He was only mortified, and would take his revenge. Lastly, if you behaved neither like his admirers in general, nor in a sulky or disputatious manner, but naturally, and as if you had a right to your jest and your independence, whether to differ with or admire, and apart from an eternal consideration of himself, he thought it an assumption, and would perplex you with all the airs and humors of an insulted beauty. Thus nobody could rely, for a comfortable intercourse with him, either upon admissions or non-admissions, or even upon flattery itself. An immeasurable vanity kept even his adorers at a distance; like Xerxes enthroned, with his millions a mile off. And if, in a fit of desperation, he condescended to come closer and be fond, he laughed at you for thinking yourself of consequence to him, if you were taken in; and hated you if you stood out, which was to think yourself of greater consequence. Neither would a knowledge of all this, if you had made him conscious, have lowered his self-admiration a jot. He would have thought it the mark of a great man,—a noble capriciousness,—an evidence of power, which none but the Alexanders

*Egotism  
and vanity*

*Egotism  
and vanity.*

and Napoleons of the intellectual world could venture upon. Mr. Hazlitt had some reason to call him "a sublime coxcomb." Who but he (or Rochester perhaps, whom he resembled) would have thought of avoiding Shakespeare, lest he should be thought to owe him anything? And talking of Napoleon,—he delighted, when he took the additional name of Noel, in consequence of his marriage with an heiress, to sign himself N. B.; "because," said he, "Bonaparte and I are the only public persons whose initials are the same."—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

*Vindictive-  
ness.*

Rev. Alexander Dyce, in his "Recollections of the Table-talk of Samuel Rogers,"<sup>1</sup> quotes Rogers as follows: "In those days at least,<sup>2</sup> Byron had no readiness of reply in conversation. If you happened to let fall any observation which offended him, he would say nothing at the time; but the offence would lie rankling in his mind; and, perhaps a fortnight after, he would come out with some very cutting remarks upon you, giving them as his deliberate opinions, the results of his experience of your character."

*"The  
Snake."*

Goëthe's *Mephistopheles* calls the serpent that tempted Eve, "My aunt—the renowned snake;" and as Shelley translated and repeated passages of

<sup>1</sup> Dyce (Rev. Alexander). Recollections of the Table-talk of Samuel Rogers. 12mo. London, 1856.

<sup>2</sup> The exact time cannot be determined, but it must have been prior to 1816.



"Faust,"—to, as he said, impregnate Byron's brain,—when he came to that passage, "My aunt, the renowned snake," Byron said, "Then you are her nephew," and henceforth he often called Shelley, the Snake; his bright eyes, slim figure, and noiseless movements, strengthened, if it did not suggest, the comparison. Byron was the real snake—a dangerous mischief-maker; his wit or humor might force a grim smile, or hollow laugh, from the standers-by, but they savored more of pain than playfulness, and made you dissatisfied with yourself and him. When I left his gloomy hall, and the echoes of the heavy iron-plated door died away, I could hardly refrain from shouting with joy as I hurried along the broad-flagged terrace which overhangs the pleasant river, cheered on my course by the cloudless sky, soft air, and fading light, which close an Italian day. — E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron, etc.").

*"The  
Snake."*

As to friendship, it is a propensity in which my genius is very limited. I do not know the *male* human being, except Lord Clare, the friend of my infancy, for whom I feel anything that deserves the name. . . . I will do my duty by my intimates, upon the principle of doing as you would be done by. I have done so, I trust, in most instances. I may be pleased with their conversation—rejoice in their success—be glad to do them service, or to receive their counsel and assistance in return. But as for friends and friendship, I have (as I already said) named the only remaining male for whom I feel anything of the kind, excepting, perhaps, Thomas

*His own  
view of  
friendship.*

*His own  
view of  
friendship.*

Moore. I have had, and may still have, a thousand friends, as they are called, in *life*, who are like one's partners in the waltz of this world—not much remembered when the ball is over, though very pleasant for the time.—LORD BYRON (quoted in Moore's "Life of Byron").

*Gross vices.  
End of the  
latest scandal.*

In concluding this very unpleasant summary of Byron's bad qualities, the editor would remark that he has not deemed it necessary to soil these pages with illustrations of Byron's notorious immorality in his relations to women. The evidence in regard to this subject is authentic and voluminous, and is easily accessible to all who take an interest in such researches. Nor has it seemed needful to enter into any consideration of the last assault upon Byron's memory, an assault of which Mr. Nichol has well said: "Strangely enough, it is from the country of Washington, whom the poet was wont to reverence as the purest patriot of the modern world, that in 1869 there emanated the hideous story which scandalized both continents, and ultimately recoiled on the retailer of the scandal. The grounds of the reckless charge have been weighed by those who have wished it to prove false, and by those who have wished it to prove true, and found wanting." The charge having been met and refuted, the whole noxious affair may well be consigned to oblivion.

*Mental  
activity.*

Almost every second day, while the *Satire* was printing, Mr. Dallas, who had undertaken to superintend it through the press, received fresh matter

for the enrichment of its pages, from the author, whose mind, once excited on any subject, knew no end to the outpourings of its wealth. In one of his short notes to Mr. Dallas, he says, "Print soon, or I shall overflow with rhyme;" and it was, in the same manner, in all his subsequent publications,—as long, at least, as he remained within reach of the printer,—that he continued thus to feed the press, to the very last moment, with new and "thick-coming fancies," which the reperusal of what he had already written suggested to him. It would almost seem, indeed, from the extreme facility and rapidity with which he produced some of his brightest passages during the progress of his works through the press, that there was in the very act of printing an excitement to his fancy, and that the rush of his thoughts towards this outlet gave increased life and freshness to their flow.—T. MOORE ("Life of Byron").

*Mental  
activity.*

His memory is one of the most retentive I ever encountered, for he does not forget even trifling occurrences, or persons to whom, I believe, he feels a perfect indifference. . . . It surprises me to witness the tenacity with which his memory retains every trivial occurrence connected with his sojourn in England and his London life. . . . For example, speaking of a mutual acquaintance, Byron said, "— was the first man I saw wear pale lemon-colored gloves, and devilish well they looked."<sup>1</sup> —COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON ("Idler in Italy").

*Memory.*

<sup>1</sup> Byron's memory retained better things than these. Those who knew him most intimately speak of his memory as something very remarkable.

*Politics.*

Scott believed that Byron's professions of liberalism were not the result of any deep conviction, but "that the pleasure it afforded him as a vehicle of displaying his wit and satire against individuals in office was at the bottom of this habit of thinking." This view, however, does not seem tenable, for Byron confirmed his words by deeds. In 1820 he joined the secret society of the Carbonari and took an active part in the Italian insurrection; and the last year of his life was devoted, at great personal sacrifices, to the cause of Greece. Mr. John Nichol, in his volume upon Byron, gives the following excellent summary of the poet's most significant words upon this subject :

"Byron regarded the established dynasties of the continent with a sincere hatred. He talks of the more than infernal tyranny of the House of Austria. To his fancy, as to Shelley's, New England is the star of the future. Attracted by a strength or rather force of character akin to his own, he worshipped Napoleon, even when driven to confess that 'the hero had sunk into a king.' He lamented his overthrow ;<sup>1</sup> but, above all, that he was beaten by 'three stupid, legitimate old dynasty boobies of regular sovereigns.' 'I write in ipecacuanha that the Bourbons are restored.' 'What right have we to prescribe laws to France? Here we are retrograding to the dull, stupid old system, balance of Europe—

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<sup>1</sup> When he heard the news of Waterloo, he said, "I am d——d sorry for it! I didn't know but I might live to see Lord Castle-reagh's head on a pole. But I suppose I sha'n't now." This was heard by George Ticknor, who noted it in his journal.

poising straws on kings' noses, instead of wringing them off.' 'The king-times are fast finishing. There will be blood shed like water, and tears like mist ; but the peoples will conquer in the end. I shall not live to see it, but I foresee it.' 'Give me a republic. Look in the history of the earth—Rome, Greece, Venice, Holland, France, America, our too short Commonwealth — and compare it with what they did under masters.' "

*Politics.*

The author has had an opportunity of learning, from the very first authority, that the importance of Lord Byron's life to the Greek cause was even greater than he had ventured to suppose it. His whole influence was turned to the best and wisest purposes ; and most singular it was to behold an individual, certainly not remarkable for prudence in his own private affairs, direct with the utmost sagacity the course to be pursued by a great nation, involved in a situation of extraordinary difficulty. It seems as if his keen and hasty temper was tamed by the importance of the task which he had undertaken. . . . His advice and control were constantly exerted to reconcile the independent and jarring chiefs with each other, to induce them to lay aside jealousies, feuds, and the miserable policy of seeking each some individual advantage ; and to determine them to employ their united means against the common enemy. It was his constant care to postpone the consideration of disputes upon speculative political maxims, and direct every effort to the recovery of national independence, without which no form of government

*Executive  
ability in  
Greece.*

could be realized.—SIR WALTER SCOTT (“Death of Lord Byron”).<sup>1</sup>

*Courage.*

Moore gives the testimony of many witnesses to Byron's courage. Colonel Stanhope, who was with him in Greece, tells of a convulsive fit which nearly ended the poet's life, and how he was bled by the surgeons till he fainted. He continues, “Soon after his dreadful paroxysm, when he was lying on his sick-bed, with his whole nervous system completely shaken, the mutinous Suliotes, covered with dirt and splendid attires, broke into his apartment, brandishing their costly arms and loudly demanding their rights. Lord Byron, electrified by this unexpected act, seemed to recover from his sickness; and the more the Suliotes raged the more his calm courage triumphed. The scene was truly sublime.”

*Favorable estimates of his character.*

What I liked about him, besides his boundless genius, was his generosity of spirit<sup>2</sup> as well as of purse, and his utter contempt of all the affectations of literature. He liked Moore and me because, with

<sup>1</sup> Scott (Sir Walter). *Miscellaneous Prose Works*. 7 vols., 8vo. Baudry, Paris, 1837.

<sup>2</sup> One of the most pleasant instances of practical kindness on Byron's part, appears in a letter which he wrote to Moore, in 1815. He says :

“By the way, if poor Coleridge—who is a man of wonderful talent, and in distress, and about to publish two volumes of Poesy and Biography, and who has been worse used by the critics than ever we were—will you if he comes out, promise me to review him favorably in the *Edinburgh Review*?”

all our other differences, we were both good-natured fellows, not caring to maintain our dignity, enjoying the *mot pour rire*.—SIR WALTER SCOTT (quoted in Moore's "Life of Byron").

*Favorable  
estimates  
of his  
character.*

Upon the occasion of Byron's death, Sir Walter Scott wrote an obituary notice, which was published in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, and was afterwards reprinted in Scott's miscellaneous works. In the course of this article Scott said: "No man had ever a kinder heart for sympathy, or a more open hand for the relief of distress; and no mind was ever more formed for the enthusiastic admiration of noble actions, providing he was convinced that the actors had proceeded on disinterested principles. Lord Byron was totally free from the curse and degradation of literature—its jealousies, we mean, and its envy."

*Scott's  
notice of  
his death.*

What do I know of Lord Byron? . . . Personally I know nothing but good of him. . . . When I was in the habit of familiarly seeing him,<sup>1</sup> he was kindness itself. At a time when Coleridge was in great embarrassment, Rogers, when calling on Byron, chanced to mention it. He immediately went to his writing-desk, and brought back a check for a hundred pounds, and insisted on its being forwarded to Coleridge. "I did not like taking it," said Rogers, who told me the story, "for I knew that he was in want of it himself." His servants he treated with a gentle consideration for their feelings

*The eulogies  
of personal  
friends.*

<sup>1</sup> Before his departure from England.



*The eulogies  
of personal  
friends.*

which I have seldom witnessed in any other, and they were devoted to him. At Newstead there was an old man who had been butler to his mother, and I have seen Byron, as the old man waited behind his chair at dinner, pour out a glass of wine and pass it to him when he thought we were too much engaged in conversation to observe what he was doing. The transaction was a thing of custom; and both parties seemed to flatter themselves that it was clandestinely affected. A hideous old woman, who had been brought in to nurse him when he was unwell at one of his lodgings, and whom few would have cared to have retained about them longer than her services were required, was carried with him, in improved attire, to his chambers in the Albany, and was seen, after his marriage, gorgeous in black silk, at his house in Piccadilly. She had done him a service and he could not forget it. Of his attachment to his friends, no one can read Moore's life, and have a doubt. . . . I have never yet heard anybody complain that Byron had once appeared to entertain a regard for him, and had afterward capriciously cast him off.—WILLIAM HARNESS (L'Estrange's "Life of Harness").

The memoir of Hodgson<sup>1</sup> bears emphatic witness to the warmth and steadfastness of Hodgson's regard for Byron. It also records many kindly and generous acts on Byron's part, and contains a correspondence between Lady Augusta Leigh and

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<sup>1</sup> Hodgson (Rev. James T.). *Memoir of the Rev. Francis Hodgson*. 2 vols., crown 8vo. London, 1878.



Hodgson, which is of considerable value as a contribution to our knowledge of Byron's married life. John Cam Hobhouse (Lord Broughton) was another of Byron's personal friends who remained constant to him throughout his life, and was one of his warmest defenders.

*The eulogies  
of personal  
friends.*

Of any partiality, . . . beyond what our mutual friendship accounts for and justifies, I am by no means conscious; nor would it be in the power, indeed, of even the most partial friend to allege anything more convincingly favorable of his character than is contained in the few simple facts with which I shall here conclude, that, through life, with all his faults, he never lost a friend;—that those about him in his youth, whether as companions, teachers, or servants, remained attached to him to the last;—that the woman, to whom he gave the love of his maturer years, idolizes his name; and that, with a single unhappy exception, scarce an instance is to be found of any one, once brought, however briefly, into relations of amity with him, that did not feel toward him a kind regard in life, and retain a fondness for his memory.—T. MOORE (“Life of Byron”).



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

1792-1822.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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THERE are two works of pre-eminent value to the student of Shelley's life and character. These are Thomas Jefferson Hogg's "Life of Shelley" and the "Recollections" of Edward John Trelawny. Two volumes of Hogg's book were published in 1858, but the work was never finished. Shelley's family became alarmed by the manner in which Hogg was working, and withdrew the letters and records which they had intrusted to him. We may well be thankful that he was able to publish these two volumes ; for, fragmentary as it is, Hogg's book is invaluable. Rough and caustic, it yet gives us many facts of Shelley's early years, and many illustrations of his complex character, which we find nowhere else. Trelawny's work shows us the Shelley of a later period. The latest edition is that of 1878, entitled "Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author." It is interesting to know that Trelawny approved of Hogg's work. W. M. Rossetti wrote in his diary, March 11, 1870, "Trelawny is now reading with extreme delight Hogg's 'Life of Shelley' (hitherto unread by him): he considers Hogg's view of the poet to be thoroughly consistent

with his own later experience" ("Talks with Trelawny," *Athenæum*, July 15, 1882). The following works are also worthy of attention: "Shelley Memorials," edited by Lady Shelley, the poet's daughter-in-law; Medwin's "Life of Shelley;" the careful and detailed memoir by W. M. Rossetti, prefixed to his edition of Shelley's poems; D. F. McCarthy's "Shelley's Early Life;" Richard Garnett's "Relics of Shelley;" and the various editions of Shelley's works. In *Fraser's Magazine*, 1858 and 1860, there are articles upon Shelley by T. L. Peacock; there are articles by R. Garnett in *Macmillan's Magazine*, June, 1860, and in the *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1878; see also an article by Thornton Hunt, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863. Incidental mention of Shelley, containing much that is valuable, may be found in Southey's "Correspondence with Caroline Bowles;" Leigh Hunt's "Autobiography," and the same author's "Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries;" Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke's "Recollections of Writers;" Moore's "Life of Byron;" R. H. Gronow's "Celebrities of London and Paris;" Henry Crabb Robinson's "Diary;" and a series of anonymous articles (which have been attributed to Barry Cornwall), entitled "A Graybeard's Gossip," in the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1847.

In 1859 Lady Shelley declared that the Shelley family were in possession of facts and documents which would vindicate Shelley's character in regard to his separation from his first wife, and his elopement with Mary Godwin. Lady Shelley promised that these facts should be made public at some fu-

ture time, and in the latest edition of her "Shelley Memorials" (1874) she repeated the promise ; but it still remains unfulfilled.<sup>1</sup> The time, therefore, is not yet ripe for a reconsideration of this painful episode. In the chronological table of the leading events of Shelley's life (p. 79) will be found those facts, and only those facts, upon which all parties agree. To attempt more than this would be impracticable in the present work. Those who wish to study the subject will find matter for much bewilderment in the volumes already cited.

Those who best knew Shelley speak of him with a warmth which seems extravagant. It is a significant fact that men of the most opposite characters, men who differed widely in their theories of life and in their modes of conduct, unite in expressions of enthusiastic devotion to their common friend. Byron, Leigh Hunt, Trelawny, Hogg—men having but little in common—say that this was the best and most lovable man they ever knew. Such testimony cannot be lightly put aside, and may fairly be opposed to the vehemence of Shelley's detractors.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the latest contributions to the Shelleyan literature is an article entitled "Shelley and Mary," in the *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1882. This article is based upon "A collection of letters and documents of a biographical character in the possession of Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, for private circulation only. 3 vols., 8vo. 1882." It is peculiarly valuable to the student of Shelley's life and character, and throws new light upon many incidents. It adds but little, however, to the former sum of knowledge concerning Shelley's separation from his wife, Harriet, and cannot be accepted as a fulfilment of Lady Shelley's promise ; since it gives us no new facts, of material importance, in regard to the subject which has occasioned so much dispute.

In his lifetime, whatever his sins, Shelley was very badly treated. His course of life was generally, in some way or other, in open conflict with the usages and dicta of society; and society is prompt to resent opposition of this kind, in whatever form it manifests itself. Accordingly, in behalf of British respectability, the pack of critics snarled and snapped at Shelley, with varying degrees of ignorance and malevolence. But, passing by these ephemeral things, which have ceased to have any importance save as matters of literary curiosity, there are other judgments more worthy of attention. There is a wide difference of opinion about Shelley, between men whose words are entitled to respect, and it is interesting to observe the extreme points of this difference, as shown by two writers, Thomas Carlyle and William Michael Rossetti. Rossetti says: "He asks for no suppressions, he needs none, and from me he gets none. After everything has been stated, we find that the man Shelley was worthy to be the poet Shelley, and praise cannot reach higher than that; we find him to call forth the most eager and fervent homage, and to be one of the ultimate glories of our race and planet."<sup>1</sup> Carlyle says: "To me poor Shelley always was, and is, a kind of ghastly object, colorless, pallid, without health, or warmth, or vigor; the sound of him shrieky, frosty, as if a ghost were trying to sing to us; the temperament of him spas-

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<sup>1</sup> Rossetti (William Michael). *Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. With Notes and a Memoir. 3 vols., 12mo. London, 1878.



modic, hysterical, instead of strong or robust ; with fine affections and aspirations, gone all such a road : a man infinitely too weak for that solitary scaling of the Alps, which he undertook in spite of all the world.”<sup>1</sup>

#### LEADING EVENTS OF SHELLEY'S LIFE.

1792. Born August 4th, at Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex.
- 1805.—(Aged 13.) A scholar at Eton.
- 1810.—(Aged 17-18.) Publishes his first work, “Zastrozzi,” a novel, in June. Goes to Oxford University in October.
- 1811.—(Aged 18-19.) Expelled from Oxford in March. Runs away to Edinburgh with Miss Harriet Westbrook, and marries her, in September.
- 1812.—(Aged 19-20.) A political agitator in Ireland.
- 1813.—(Aged 21.) Publishes “Queen Mab.”<sup>2</sup>
- 1814.—(Aged 21-22.) Remarries his wife, Harriet, March 24th. Elopes with Mary W. Godwin, July 28th, and takes her and her sister, Jane Clairmont, to Switzerland. They return to England in September.
- 1815.—(Aged 23.) His grandfather dies, and he becomes heir to the family estates. In England, living with Mary W. Godwin.
- 1816.—(Aged 23-24.) Publishes “Alastor.” Revisits Switzerland with Mary W. Godwin and Jane Clairmont in May, and meets Byron for the first time, at Geneva. Returns to Eng-

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<sup>1</sup> Carlyle (Thomas). *Reminiscences*. Edited by J. A. Froude. 8vo. London and New York, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> This was a private issue of two hundred and fifty copies, which were distributed gratuitously. This issue was pirated, and the poem was republished, against Shelley's protest, in 1821.

land in September. His wife, Harriet, commits suicide in November.(?) He marries Mary W. Godwin in December.

1817.—(Aged 25.) Lord Chancellor Eldon deprives him of his son and daughter, the children of his first marriage. He lives at Great Marlow with his second wife.

1818.—(Aged 26.) Publishes "The Revolt of Islam," which, under the title "Laon and Cythna," had been published in the preceding year. Goes to Italy with his wife.

1819.—(Aged 27). Publishes "The Cenci," at Leghorn.

1820.—(Aged 28.) Publishes "Prometheus Unbound." Living at Pisa.

1821.—(Aged 29.) Publishes "Adonais," and Epipsychidion.

1822.—(Aged 29 years, 11 months.) Drowned, in the Bay of Spezia, July 8th.





*Percy B Shelley.*





## PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

THE most authentic records of Shelley's childhood are contained in some letters written by his sister. The following extracts have been made from these letters, as printed in Hogg's "Life of Shelley."<sup>1</sup>

*His childhood, described by his sister.*

"At this distant period I can scarcely remember my *first* impressions of Bysshe, but he would frequently come to the nursery and was full of a peculiar kind of pranks. One piece of mischief, for which he was rebuked, was running a stick through the ceiling of a low passage to find some new chamber, which could be made effective for some flights of his vivid imagination. The tales, to which we have sat and listened, evening after evening, seated on his knee, when we came to the dining-room for dessert, were anticipated with that pleasing dread, which so excites the minds of children, and fastens so strongly and indelibly on the memory. There was a spacious garret under the roof of Field Place, and a room, which had been closed for years, excepting an entrance made by the removal of a board in the garret floor. This unknown land was

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<sup>1</sup> Hogg (Thomas Jefferson). Life of Shelley. Vols. 1-2, 8vo. London, 1858. (*Never completed.*)

*His childhood, described by his sister.*

made the abode of an alchemist, old and gray, with a long beard. . . . We were to go and see him some day ; but we were content to wait, and a cave was to be dug in the orchard for the better accommodation of this Cornelius Agrippa. Another favorite theme was the 'Great Tortoise,' that lived in Warnham Pond ; and any unwonted noise was accounted for by the presence of this great beast, which was made into the fanciful proportions most adapted to excite awe and wonder.

"Bysshe was certainly fond of eccentric amusements, but they delighted us, as children, quite as much as if our minds had been naturally attuned to the same tastes ; for we dressed ourselves in strange costumes to personate spirits, or fiends, and Bysshe would take a fire-stove and fill it with some inflammable liquid, and carry it flaming into the kitchen and to the back-door. . . . When my brother commenced his studies in chemistry, and practised electricity upon us, I confess my pleasure in it was entirely negatived by terror at its effects.

"He was, at a later period, in the habit of walking out at night. . . . The old servant of the family would follow him, and say, that 'Master Bysshe only took a walk, and came back again.' He was full of cheerful fun, and had all the comic vein so agreeable in a household.

"I remember well how he used to sing to us ; he could not bear any turns or twists in music, but liked a tune played quite simply. . . . His good temper was a pleasant memory always, and I do not recollect an instance of the reverse towards any of us."



Mrs. Shelley, the poet's second wife, is quoted as follows in Hogg's "Life of Shelley:" "Amongst his other self-sought studies, he was passionately attached to the study of what used to be called the occult sciences, conjointly with that of the new wonders, which chemistry and natural philosophy have displayed to us. His pocket-money was spent in the purchase of books relative to these darling pursuits,—of chemical apparatus and materials. . . . Sometimes he watched the livelong night for ghosts. At his father's house, where his influence was, of course, great among the dependants, he even planned how he might get admission to the vault, or charnel-house, at Warnham Church, and might sit there all night, harrowed by fear, yet trembling with expectation, to see one of the spiritualized owners of the bones piled around him."

*Mary Shelley's account of his childhood.*

In the year 1809<sup>1</sup> an incident occurred at Eton which caused no small sensation and merriment throughout the school. It was announced one morning that Shelley, the future poet, had actually accepted wager of battle from Sir Thomas Styles. Whether he had received an insult, and that vast disproportion in size gave him confidence, or that overflow of the warlike descriptions of Homer's heroes, he was forced to imitate their exploits against some one or other, remains a secret. Meet, however, they did, after twelve, in the playing-field. The usual preliminaries were arranged—a ring was formed, seconds and bottle-holders were all in readiness, and

*A fight at Eton.*

<sup>1</sup> When Shelley was about seventeen years old.

*A fight at  
Eton.*

the combatants stood face to face. The tall lank figure of the poet towered above the diminutive, thickset little baronet by nearly a head or so. In the first round no mischief was done; Sir Thomas seemed to be feeling his way, being naturally desirous of ascertaining what his gigantic adversary was made of; and Shelley, though brandishing his long arms, had evidently no idea of their use in a pugilistic point of view. After a certain amount of sparring without effect, the combatants were invited by their seconds to take breath. The baronet did not hesitate to accept the offer to sit upon the knee of his second; but Shelley disdainfully declined to rest, and calculating upon finishing the fight by a single blow, stalked round the ring, looking defiance at his little adversary.

Time was called, and the battle was renewed in earnest. The baronet, somewhat cautious, planted his first blow upon the chest of Shelley, who did not appear to relish it. However, though not a proficient in the art of self-defence, he nevertheless went in, and knocked the little baronet off his legs, who lay sprawling upon the grass, more dead than alive. Shelley's confidence increased; he stalked round the ring as before, and spouted one of the defiant addresses usual with Homer's heroes when about to commence a single combat: the young poet, being a first-rate classical scholar, actually delivered the speech in the original Greek, to the no small amusement of the boys. In the third and last round Styles went to work like a first rate artist, and, after several slighter blows, delivered what is called in the prize ring "a heavy slogger" on Shelley's

bread-basket ; this seemed positively to electrify the bard, for, I blush to say, he broke through the ring, and took to his heels with a speed that defied pursuit. His seconds, backers, and all who had witnessed the fight, joined in full cry after him, but he outran them all, and got safe to the house of his tutor, Mr. Bethel. . . . Shelley never more during his stay . . . ventured to enter the pugilistic arena.—R. H. GRONOW ("Celebrities of London and Paris").<sup>1</sup>

*A fight at Eton.*

He passed among his schoolfellows as a strange and unsocial being, for when a holiday relieved us from our tasks, and the other boys were engaged in such sports as the narrow circuit of our prison-court allowed, Shelley, who entered into none of them, would pace backwards and forwards . . . along the southern wall.—THOMAS MEDWIN ("Life of Shelley").<sup>2</sup>

*School-days at Eton.*

In his "Life of Shelley," Hogg inserts a letter from Walter S. Halliday, from which the following extract has been made : "Many a long and happy walk have I had with him in the beautiful neighborhood of dear old Eton. We used to wander for hours about Clewer, Frogmore, the Park at Windsor, the Terrace ; and I was a delighted and willing listener to his marvellous stories of fairy-land, and apparitions, and spirits, and haunted ground ; and

*Recollections of a school fellow.*

<sup>1</sup> Gronow (Rees Howell). *Celebrities of London and Paris*. 16mo. London, 1865.

<sup>2</sup> Medwin (Thomas). *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*. 2 vols., 12mo. London, 1847.

*Recollections of a school-fellow.*

his speculations were then (for his mind was far more developed than mine) of the world beyond the grave. . . . I was myself too young to form any estimate of character, but I loved Shelley for his kindliness and affectionate ways : he was not made to endure the rough and boisterous pastime at Eton, and his shy and gentle nature was glad to escape far away to muse over strange fancies, for his mind was reflective and teeming with deep thought. His lessons were child's play to him, and his power of Latin versification marvellous. I think I remember some long work he had even then commenced, but I never saw it. . . . He had great moral courage, and feared nothing, but what was base, and false, and low. He never joined in the usual sports of the boys, and, what is remarkable, never went out in a boat on the river." <sup>1</sup>

*Personal appearance.*

Shelley was at this time tall for his age,<sup>2</sup> slightly and delicately built, and rather narrow-chested, with a complexion fair and ruddy, a face rather long than oval. His features, not regularly handsome, were set off by a profusion of silky brown hair, that curled naturally. The expression of countenance was one of exceeding sweetness and innocence. His blue eyes were very large and prominent. . . . They were at times, when he was abstracted, as he often was in contemplation, dull, and, as it were, insensible to external objects ; at others they flashed with the fire of intelligence.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Ten years. Medwin was one of his school-mates at this time.

. . . He was naturally calm, but when he heard of or read of some flagrant act of injustice, oppression, or cruelty, then indeed the sharpest marks of horror and indignation were visible in his countenance.—THOMAS MEDWIN ("Life of Shelley").

*Personal  
appearance.*

His figure was slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much, that he seemed of low stature. His clothes were expensive, and made according to the most approved mode of the day ; but they were tumbled, rumpled, and unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt, and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. His complexion was delicate, and almost feminine, of the purest red and white ; yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having passed the autumn, as he said, in shooting. His features, his whole face, and particularly his head, were, in fact, unusually small ; yet the last *appeared* of remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence, and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers quickly through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough. In times when it was customary to imitate stage-coachmen as closely as possible in costume, and when the hair was invariably cropped, like that of our soldiers, this eccentricity was very striking.

His features were not symmetrical (the mouth, perhaps, excepted), yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation,

*Personal  
appearance.*

a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual ; for there was a softness, a delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise many) that air of profound religious veneration, that characterizes the best works, and chiefly the frescoes (and into these they infused their whole souls), of the great masters of Florence and of Rome. I recognized the very peculiar expression in these wonderful productions long afterward, and with a satisfaction mingled with much sorrow, for it was after the decease of him in whose countenance I had first observed it.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

*Voice.*

I beheld<sup>1</sup> a fair, freckled, blue-eyed, light-haired, delicate-looking person, whose countenance was serious and thoughtful ; whose stature would have been rather tall had he carried himself upright ; whose earnest voice, though never loud, was somewhat unmusical. Manifest as it was that his pre-occupied mind had no thought to spare for the modish adjustment of his fashionably made clothes, it was impossible to doubt, even for a moment, that you were gazing upon a gentleman.<sup>2</sup> . . . “Never did a more finished gentleman than Shelley step across a drawing-room,” was the remark of Lord

<sup>1</sup> In 1816.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Medwin says, in his “Life of Shelley :” “Shelley was a man of the nicest habits,—the most scrupulous nicety in his person ; invariably, whatever might be his occupation, making his toilet for dinner.”

Byron.—ANONYMOUS ("A Graybeard's Gossip," *New Monthly Magazine*, 1847).

Shelley, when he died, was in his thirtieth year. His figure was tall and slight, and his constitution consumptive. He was subject to violent spasmodic pains, which would sometimes force him to lie on the ground till they were over ; but he had always a kind word to give to those about him, when his pangs allowed him to speak. . . . Though well-turned, his shoulders were bent a little, owing to premature thought and trouble. The same causes had touched his hair with gray ; and though his habits of temperance and exercise gave him a remarkable degree of strength, it is not supposed that he could have lived many years. . . . His eyes were large and animated, with a dash of wildness in them ; his face small, but well-shaped, especially the mouth and chin, the turn of which was very sensitive and graceful. His complexion was naturally fair and delicate, with a color in the cheeks. He had brown hair, which, though tinged with gray, surmounted his face well, being in considerable quantity, and tending to a curl. His side-face upon the whole was deficient in strength, and his features would not have told well in a bust ; but when fronting and looking at you attentively, his aspect had a certain seraphical character that would have suited John the Baptist, or the angel whom Milton describes as holding a reed "tipt with fire."—LEIGH HUNT ("Autobiography").<sup>1</sup>

*Personal  
appearance.*

<sup>1</sup> Hunt (James Henry Leigh). *Autobiography and Reminiscences*. 3 vols., 16mo. London, 1850.



*Personal  
appearance.*

Shelley was tall and slight of figure, with a singular union of general delicacy of organization and muscular strength. His hair was brown, prematurely touched with gray ; his complexion fair and glowing ; his eyes gray and extremely vivid ; his face small and delicately featured, especially about the lower part ; and he had an expression of countenance, when he was talking in his usual earnest fashion, giving you the idea of something "seraphical."—LEIGH HUNT (from a letter quoted by S. C. Hall in his "Book of Memories").

His face was round, flat, pale, with small features ; mouth beautifully shaped ; hair bright brown and wavy ; and such a pair of eyes as are rarely in the human or any other head,—intensely blue, with a gentle and lambent expression, yet wonderfully alert and engrossing ; nothing appeared to escape his knowledge. . . . Shelley's figure was a little above the middle height, slender, and of delicate construction, which appeared the rather from a lounging or waving manner in his gait, as though his frame was compounded barely of muscle and tendon ; and that the power of walking was an achievement with him, and not a natural habit.—CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE ("Recollections").<sup>1</sup>

He still (1818) had that ultra-youthful figure that partook the traits of the hobbledohoy, arrived at man's stature, but not yet possessing the full manly

<sup>1</sup> Clarke (Charles Cowden and Mary Cowden). *Recollections of Writers.* 12mo. London and New York, 1878.



proportions. His extremities were large, his limbs long, his face small, and his thorax very partially developed, especially in girth. In habitual eagerness of mood, thrusting forward his face, made him stoop, with sunken chest and rounded shoulders. . . . But in his countenance there was life instead of weariness; melancholy more often yielded to alternations of bright thoughts; and paleness had given way to a certain freshness of color, with something like roses in the cheeks.—THORNTON HUNT (*Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863).

*Personal  
appearance.*

His features were small—the upper part of his face not strictly regular—the eyes unusually prominent, too much so for beauty. His mouth was moulded after the finest modelling of Greek art, and wore an habitual expression of benevolence, and when he smiled, his smile irradiated his whole countenance. His hands were thin, and expressed feeling to the finger's ends; . . . his hair, profuse, silken, and naturally curling, was at a very early period interspersed with gray. . . . He did not look so tall as he was, being nearly five feet eleven, for his shoulders were a little bent by study, . . . owing to his being near-sighted, and leaning over his books, and which increased the narrowness of his chest.—THOMAS MEDWIN ("Life of Shelley").

In 1880 an interview with E. J. Trelawny was published in the *Whitehall Review* (London). He is reported to have spoken of Shelley's appearance as follows:

*Personal  
appearance.*

“‘What,’ he growled, ‘is all that rubbish that Symonds writes about Shelley being too beautiful to paint? Too beautiful to paint, indeed! When he was quite young he might have had the beauty that we admire in children or young girls, but he had no manly beauty. He was narrow-chested and he stooped like a scholar. You could see that from a child, almost a baby, he had been bending over books. He had the smallest head of any man I ever knew; Byron’s came next. His eyes were slightly prominent, and there was hardly any of the white visible. To see him in a crowd was like seeing a stag in the midst of a herd of deer. The deer has a timid way of looking on the ground, but the stag walks with lifted head and shining eyes. His were like stars.’”<sup>1</sup>

*Dress.*

I never remember to have seen Bysshe in a great-coat or cloak, even in the coldest weather. He wore his waistcoat much or entirely open. . . . Unless he was compelled to cover it by main force, he had his throat bare; the neckcloth being cast aside, lost, over the hills and far away, and the collar of his shirt unbuttoned. In the street or road he reluctantly wore a hat, but in fields and gardens his little round head had no other covering than his long, wild, ragged locks.—T. J. Hogg (“Life of Shelley”).

The real man was reconcilable with all these de-

<sup>1</sup> Another description of Shelley’s appearance, by Trelawny, will be found upon p. 133.

scriptions.<sup>1</sup> His traits suggested everything that has been said of him ; but his aspect, conformation, and personal qualities contained more than any one has ascribed to him, and more indeed than all put together. A few plain matters-of-fact will make this intelligible. Shelley was a tall man,—nearly, if not quite, five feet ten in height. He was peculiarly slender, and . . . his chest had palpably enlarged after the usual growing period. He retained the same kind of straitness in the perpendicular outline on each side of him ; his shoulders were the reverse of broad, but yet they were not sloping, and a certain squareness in them was naturally incompatible with anything feminine in his appearance. To his last days he still suffered his chest to collapse ; but it was less a stoop than a peculiar mode of holding the head and shoulders,—the face thrown a little forward, and the shoulders slightly elevated ; though the whole attitude below the shoulders, when standing, was unusually upright, and had the appearance of litheness and activity. . . . He had an oval face and delicate features, not unlike those given to him in the well-known miniature. His forehead was high. His fine, dark brown hair, when not cut close, disposed itself in playful and very beautiful curls over his brows and round the back of his neck. He had brown eyes,<sup>2</sup> with a color in his cheek “like a girl’s ;”

*Analysis of  
the various  
accounts of  
his personal  
appearance.*

<sup>1</sup> The writer is commenting upon the various accounts of Shelley’s personal appearance.

<sup>2</sup> Leigh Hunt says that Shelley’s eyes were gray ; all the other authorities say that they were blue.

*Analysis of  
the various  
accounts of  
his personal  
appearance.*

but as he grew older, his complexion bronzed. So far the reality agrees with the current descriptions ; nevertheless they omit material facts. The outline of the features and face possessed a firmness and *hardness* entirely inconsistent with a feminine character. The outline was sharp and firm ; the markings distinct, and indicating an energetic *physique*. The outline of the bone was distinctly perceptible at the temples, on the bridge of the nose, at the back portion of the cheeks, and in the jaw, and the artist could trace the principal muscles of the face. The beard, also, although the reverse of strong, was clearly marked, especially about the chin. Thus, although the general aspect was peculiarly slight, youthful, and delicate, yet, when you looked to “the points” of the animal, you saw well enough the indications of a masculine vigor, in many respects far above the average. And what I say of the physical aspect of course bears upon the countenance. That changed with every feeling. It usually looked earnest,—when joyful, was singularly bright and animated, like that of a gay young girl,—when saddened, had an aspect of sorrow peculiarly touching, and sometimes it fell into a listless weariness still more mournful ; but for the most part there was a look of active movement, promptitude, vigor, and decision, which bespoke a manly, and even a commanding character. — THORNTON HUNT (*Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863).

*Voice.*

There was one physical blemish that threatened to neutralize all his excellence. “This is a fine, clever fellow,” I said to myself, “but I can never

bear his society ; I shall never be able to endure his voice ; it would kill me. What a pity it is !” I am very sensible of imperfections, and especially of painful sounds,—and the voice of the stranger was excruciating ; it was intolerably shrill, harsh, and discordant ; of the most cruel intension,—it was perpetual and without any remission,—it excoriated the ears.—T. J. HOGG (“ Life of Shelley ”).

*Voice.*

The weakness ascribed to Shelley’s voice was . . . taken from exceptional instances, and the account of it usually suggests the idea that he spoke in a falsetto which might almost be mistaken for the “ shriek ” of a harsh-toned woman. Nothing could be more unlike the reality. The voice was indeed quite peculiar, and I do not know where any parallel to it is likely to be found unless in Lancashire. . . . His speaking voice unquestionably was that of a high natural counter-tenor. I should say that he usually spoke at a pitch somewhere about the D natural above the base line ; but it was in no respect a falsetto. It was a natural chest-voice, not powerful, but telling, musical, and expressive. In reading aloud the strain was peculiarly clear, and had a sustained, song-like quality, which came out more strongly when, as he often did, he recited verse. When he called out in pain, —a very rare occurrence,—or sometimes in comic playfulness, you might hear the “ shrillness ” of which people talk ; but it was only because the organ was forced beyond the ordinary effort. His usual speech was clear, and yet with a breath in it, with an especially distinct articulation, a soft, vi-

brating tone, emphatic, pleasant, and persuasive.—  
 THORNTON HUNT (*Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863).

*Voice.*

In the interview referred to on a preceding page Trelawny said, in reply to a question about Shelley's voice :

"Of course all the Shelley biographers must go on repeating Hogg's assertion about the harsh shrillness of the poet's tones. No doubt he was habitually hoarse in this climate. You always find that Italians lose their voice on coming to England, while that of the English gets sweeter in Italy. Shelley's voice was soft and pleasant—at any rate when I knew him." W. M. Rossetti, in his "Talks with Trelawny," published in *The Athenæum*, July 15, 1882, says, "Trelawny had not an unpleasant impression of Shelley's voice, save when he was excited, and then it turned shrieky ; as on one occasion when Shelley came in much perturbed, from an interview with Byron, and screeched, 'By God, he's no better than a Christian !'"

It is difficult to know what to think about this matter. The authorities differ materially. Medwin says, in his "Life of Shelley," "His voice was soft and low, but broken in its tones,—when anything much interested him, harsh and immodulated ; and this peculiarity he never lost." R. H. Gronow, who was a school-fellow of Shelley's at Eton, speaks of his high, shrill voice. Leigh Hunt, who knew him well, says, "His voice was high and weak."

*No ear for  
 music.*

Shelley had no ear for music,—the words that he wrote for existing airs being, strangely enough, in-

appropriate in rhythm and even in cadence ; and although he had a manifest relish for music and often talked of it, I do not remember that I ever heard him sing even the briefest snatch.<sup>1</sup>—THORNTON HUNT (*Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863).

*No ear for  
music.*

Notwithstanding the sense of weakness in the chest, which attacked him on any sudden effort, his power of exertion was considerable. Once, returning from a long excursion, and entering the house by the back way, up a precipitous, though not perpendicular bank, the women of the party had to be helped ; and Shelley was the most active in rendering that assistance. While others were content to accomplish the feat for one, he, I think, helped three up the bank, sliding in a half-sitting posture when he returned to fetch a new charge. I well remember his shooting past me in a cloud of chalk dust, as I was slowly climbing up. . . . I can also recollect that although he frequently preferred to steer rather than to put forth his strength, yet if it were necessary, he would take an oar, and could stick to his seat for any time against any force of current or of wind, not only without complaining, but without being compelled to give in until the set task was accomplished, though it should involve some miles of hard pulling. These facts indicate the amount of "grit" that lay under the outward appearance of weakness and excitable nerves.—THORNTON HUNT (*Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863).

*Physical  
strength.*

He told me the greatest delight he experienced at

<sup>1</sup> Yet his sister speaks of his singing. See p. 82.



*Boating.*

Eton was from boating, for which he had . . . early acquired a taste. I was present at a regatta in which he assisted, in 1809, and seemed to enjoy with great zest.<sup>1</sup> A wherry was his *beau idéal* of happiness. . . . A boat was to Shelley, what a plaything is to a child. . . . He was nineteen when he used to float paper flotillas at Oxford. . . . He crossed the Channel to Calais in an open boat, a rash experiment. . . . He descended the Rhine on a sort of raft.—THOMAS MEDWIN (“Life of Shelley”).

*Grace and awkwardness.*

Among the innumerable contradictions in the character and deportment of the youthful poet was a strange mixture of a singular grace, which manifested itself in his actions and gestures, with an occasional awkwardness almost as remarkable. . . . Shelley came tumbling upstairs, with a mighty sound, treading upon his nose, as I accused him of doing, rushed into the room, and throwing off his neckcloth, according to custom, stood staring around for some moments, as wondering why he had been in such a hurry.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

He would stumble in stepping across the floor of a drawing-room, he would trip himself up on a smooth-shaven grass-plot, and he would tumble in the most inconceivable manner in ascending the commodious, facile, and well-carpeted staircase of an elegant mansion ; . . . on the contrary, he

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<sup>1</sup> W. S. Halliday, who was at Eton with Shelley, says that he never went out on the river. But there is abundant evidence to show that in later years he was passionately fond of boating.



would often glide without collision through a crowded assembly, thread with unerring dexterity a most intricate path, or securely and rapidly tread the most arduous and uncertain ways.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

*Grace and awkwardness.*

His letters inform us, that he had occasionally restricted himself in great measure, if not entirely, to a vegetable diet. . . . It was not until the spring of 1813 that he entered upon a full and exact course of vegetable diet. . . . His nutriment had ever been, and always was, simple, consisting . . . principally of bread eaten by itself or with some very slight or frugal condiment. Spirituous liquors he never tasted; beer rarely. He never called for, purchased, or drew, wine for his own drinking; but if it came in his way, and the company was not disagreeable to him, he would sit at table awhile after dinner, and take two or three glasses of any white wine, uniformly selecting the weakest.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

*A vegetarian.  
Stimulants.  
Tobacco.*

Shelley, says Trelawny, never smoked, but tolerated any amount of smoking in Trelawny himself or others.—W. M. ROSSETTI (“Talks with Trelawny,” *Athenæum*, July 15, 1882).

He had, . . . though a delicate, a naturally good constitution, which he had impaired at one period of his life by an excessive use of opium,<sup>1</sup> and

*Opium.*

<sup>1</sup> There does not appear to be any good corroborative evidence upon this point. One or two instances are recorded, by other biographers, when Shelley used opium; but there is nothing to justify Medwin's assertion, or to warrant the inferences which might be drawn from it.

a Pythagorean diet, which greatly emaciated his system and weakened his digestion.—THOMAS MEDWIN (“Life of Shelley”).

*Fondness  
for bread.*

Bysshe’s dietary was frugal and independent ; very remarkable and quite peculiar to himself. When he felt hungry he would dash into the first baker’s shop, buy a loaf and rush out again, bearing it under his arm ; and he strode onwards in his rapid course, breaking off pieces of bread and greedily swallowing them. But however frugal the fare, the waste was considerable, and his path might be tracked, like that of Hop-o’-my-Thumb through the wood, in Mother Goose her Tale, by a long line of crumbs. The spot where he sat reading or writing, and eating his dry bread, was likewise marked out by a circle of crumbs and fragments scattered on the floor. He took with bread, frequently by way of condiment, not water-cresses, as did the Persians of old, but common pudding raisins. These he purchased at some mean little shop, that he might be the more speedily served, and he carried them loose in his waistcoat-pocket, and eat them with his dry bread. . . . He was walking one day in London with a respectable solicitor, who occasionally transacted business for him ; with his accustomed precipitation he suddenly vanished, and as suddenly reappeared ; he had entered the shop of a little grocer in an obscure quarter, and had returned with some plums, which he held close under the attorney’s nose, and the man of fact was as much astonished at the offer, as his client, the man of fancy, at the refusal.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

He occasionally rolled up little pellets of bread, and, in a sly, mysterious manner, shot them with his thumb, hitting the persons—whom he met in his walks—on the face, commonly on the nose, at which he grew to be very dextrous. When he was dining at a coffee-house, he would sometimes amuse himself thus. . . . A person receiving an unceremonious fillip on the nose, after this fashion, started and stared about, but I never found that anybody, although I was often apprehensive that some one might resent it, perceived or suspected, from what quarter the offending missile had come. The wounded party seemed to find satisfaction in gazing upwards, at the ceiling, and in the belief that a piece of plaster had fallen from thence. When he was eating his bread alone over his book he would shoot his pellets about the room, taking aim at a picture, at an image, or at any other object that attracted his notice. He had been taught by a French lady to make panada; and with this food he often indulged himself. His simple cookery was performed thus. He broke a quantity—often, indeed, a surprising quantity—of bread into a large basin, and poured boiling water upon it. When the bread had been steeped awhile, and had swelled sufficiently, he poured off the water, squeezing it out of the bread, which he chopped up with a spoon; he then sprinkled powdered loaf sugar over it, and grated nutmeg upon it, and devoured the mass with a prodigious relish. He was standing one day in the middle of the room, basin in hand, feeding himself voraciously, gorging himself with pap.

*Bread-  
bails.  
Panada.*

“Why, Bysshe,” I said, “you lap it up as greedily

as the Valkyriæ of Scandinavian story lap up the blood of the slain!"

*"Lapping  
up the blood  
of the  
slain."*

"Aye!" he shouted out with grim delight, "I lap up the blood of the slain!"

The idea captivated him; he was continually repeating the words; and he often took panada, I suspect, merely to indulge this wild fancy, and to say, "I am going to lap up the blood of the slain! To sup up the gore of murdered kings."

Having previously fed himself after his fashion from his private stores, he was independent of dinner, and quite indifferent to it, the slice of tough mutton would remain untouched upon his plate, and he would sit at table reading some book, often reading aloud, seemingly unconscious of the hospitable rites in which others were engaged, his bread bullets meanwhile being discharged in every direction.—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*Love of  
chemistry:  
Eton.*

Shelley passed his leisure hours<sup>1</sup> in making various experiments in chemistry and natural science. He even went so far as to employ a travelling tinker to assist him in making a miniature steam-engine, which burst, and very nearly blew the bard and the Bethel family into the air.—R. H. GRONOW ("Celebrities of London and Paris").

*Life at Ox-  
ford.*

He was, indeed, a whole university in himself to me, in respect of the stimulus and incitement which his example afforded to my love of study, and he amply atoned for the disappointment I had felt on my arrival at Oxford. . . . We almost in-

<sup>1</sup> At Eton, in 1802.

variably passed the afternoon and evening together. . . . His rooms were preferred to mine, because there his philosophical apparatus was at hand; and at that period he was not perfectly satisfied with the condition and circumstances of his existence, unless he was able to start from his seat at any moment, and seizing the air-pump, some magnets, the electrical machine, or the bottles containing those noxious and nauseous fluids, wherewith he incessantly besmeared and disfigured himself and his goods, to ascertain by actual experiment the value of some new idea that rushed into his brain. He spent much time in working by fits and starts and in an irregular manner with his instruments, and especially consumed his hours and his money in the assiduous cultivation of chemistry.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

*Life at Oxford.*

He was a devoted worshipper of the water-nymphs; for whenever he found a pool, or even a small puddle, he would loiter near it, and it was no easy task to get him to quit it. He had not yet learned that art, from which he afterward derived so much pleasure—the construction of paper-boats. He twisted a morsel of paper into a form that a lively fancy might consider a likeness of a boat, and committing it to the water, he anxiously watched the fortunes of the frail bark, which, if it was not soon swamped by the faint winds and miniature waves, gradually imbibed water through its porous sides, and sank. Sometimes, however, the fairy vessel performed its little voyage, and reached the opposite shore of the puny ocean in safety. It is

*Paper-boat navigation.*

*Paper-boat  
navigation.*

astonishing with what keen delight he engaged in this singular pursuit. It was not easy for an uninitiated spectator to bear with tolerable patience the vast delay, on the brink of a wretched pond upon a bleak common, and in the face of a cutting northeast wind, on returning to dinner from a long walk at sunset on a cold winter's day. . . . So long as his paper lasted, he remained riveted to the spot, fascinated by this peculiar amusement; all waste paper was rapidly consumed, then the covers of letters, next letters of little value; the most precious contributions of the most esteemed correspondence, although eyed wistfully many times, and often returned to the pocket, were sure to be sent at last in pursuit of the former squadrons. . . . It has been said, that he once found himself on the north bank of the Serpentine River without the materials for indulging those inclinations, which the sight of water invariably inspired, for he had exhausted his supplies on the round pond in Kensington Gardens. Not a single scrap of paper could be found, save only a bank-post bill for fifty pounds; he hesitated long, but yielded at last; he twisted it into a boat with the extreme refinement of his skill, and committed it with the utmost dexterity to fortune, watching its progress, if possible, with a still more intense anxiety than usual. Fortune often favors those who frankly and fully trust her; the northeast wind gently wafted the costly skiff to the south bank, where, during the latter part of the voyage, the venturous owner had awaited its arrival with patient solicitude.—T. J. Hogg ("Life of Shelley").

At times he was as sportive as his child (with whom he would play by the hour on the floor), and his wit flowed in a continual stream—not that broad humor which is so much in vogue at the present day, but a genuine wit, classical I might say, and refined, that caused a smile rather than a laugh.<sup>1</sup>—THOMAS MEDWIN (“Life of Shelley”).

*Playfulness.*

Shelley often came to Hampstead to see me, sometimes to stop for several days. He delighted in the natural broken ground, and in the fresh air of the place, especially when the wind set in from the northwest, which used to give him an intoxication of animal spirits. Here also he swam his paper-boats on the ponds, and delighted to play with my children, particularly with my eldest boy,<sup>2</sup> the seriousness of whose imagination, and his susceptibility of a “grim” impression (a favorite epithet of Shelley’s), highly interested him. He would play at “frightful creatures” with him, from which the other would snatch a “fearful joy,” only begging him occasionally “not to do the horn,” which was a way Shelley had of screwing up his hair in front, to imitate a weapon of that sort.—LEIGH HUNT (“Autobiography”).

*Playing  
with chil-  
dren.*

I can remember well one day when we were both for some long time engaged in gambols, broken off

<sup>1</sup> Charles Cowden Clarke, in “Recollections of Writers,” says, “I have the remembrance of his scampering and bounding over the gorse-bushes on Hampstead Heath late one night,—now close upon us, and now shouting from the height, like a wild school-boy.”

<sup>2</sup> Thornton Hunt.



*Playing  
with chil-  
dren.*

by my terror at his screwing up his long and curling hair into a horn, and approaching me with rampant paws and frightful gestures as some imaginative monster.—THORNTON HUNT (*Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863).

*Rambles  
with a boy.*

Shelley often called me for a long ramble on the heath, or into regions which I then thought far distant; and I went with him rather than with my father, because he walked faster, and talked with me while he walked, instead of being lost in his own thoughts and conversing only at intervals. A love of wandering seemed to possess him in the most literal sense; his rambles seemed to be without design, or any limit but my fatigue; and when I was "done up," he carried me home in his arms, on his shoulder, or pickback. Our communion was not always concord; as I have intimated, he took a pleasure in frightening me, though I never really lost my confidence in his protection, if he would only drop the fantastic aspects that he delighted to assume.—THORNTON HUNT (*Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1863).

I have already pointed out several contradictions in his appearance and character; his ordinary preparation for a rural walk formed a very remarkable contrast with his mild aspect and pacific habits. He furnished himself with a pair of duelling pistols, and a good store of powder and ball; and when he came to a solitary spot, he pinned a card, or fixed some other mark upon a tree or bank, and amused himself by firing at it; he was a pretty



good shot, and was much delighted at his success.<sup>1</sup>  
 . . . The duelling pistols were a most discordant interruption of the repose of a quiet country walk ; besides, he handled them with such inconceivable carelessness, that I had perpetually reason to apprehend that . . . he would shoot himself, or me, or both of us.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

*Rambles  
with a boy.*

Shelley loved everything better than himself. Self-preservation is, they say, the first law of nature, with him it was the last ; and the only pain he ever gave his friends arose from the utter indifference with which he treated everything concerning himself. I was bathing one day in a deep pool in the Arno, and astonished the poet by performing a series of aquatic gymnastics, which I had learned from the natives of the South Seas. On my coming out, whilst dressing, Shelley said, mournfully, “Why can’t I swim, it seems so very easy ?” I answered, “Because you think you can’t. If you determine, you will ; take a header off this bank, and when you rise turn on your back, you will float like a duck ; but you must reverse the arch in your spine, for it’s now bent the wrong way.” He doffed his jacket and trowsers, kicked off his shoes and socks, and plunged in ; and there he lay stretched out on the bottom like a conger-eel, not making the least effort or struggle to save himself. He would have been drowned if I had not instantly fished him out. When he recovered his breath, he said : “I always

*Careless of  
his own  
safety.*

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt, Trelawny, and others tell of his fondness for this amusement, and how he and Byron joined in the sport, during their life together in Italy.

*Careless of  
his own  
safety.*

find the bottom of the well, and they say Truth lies there. In another minute I should have found it, and you would have found an empty shell. It is an easy way of getting rid of the body." "What would Mrs. Shelley have said to me if I had gone back to her with your empty cage?" "Don't tell Mary—not a word!" he rejoined, and then continued, "It's a great temptation; in another minute, I might have been in another planet."—E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron," etc.).

*Indiffer-  
ence to  
death.*

He was once with me in a gale of wind, in a small boat, right under the rocks between Meillerie and St. Gingo. We were five in the boat—a servant, two boatmen, and ourselves. The sail was mismanaged, and the boat was filling fast. He can't swim. I stripped off my coat, made him strip off his, and take hold of an oar, telling him that I thought (being myself an expert swimmer) I could save him, if he would not struggle when I took hold of him. . . . We were then about a hundred yards from shore, and the boat in peril. He answered me with the greatest coolness, that he had no notion of being saved, and that I would have enough to do to save myself, and begged not to trouble me. Luckily the boat righted, and, bailing, we got round a point into St. Gingo.—LORD BYRON (quoted in Moore's "Life of Byron").

*Prussic  
acid.*

*Lerici, June 18, 1822.*—MY DEAR TRELAWNY, . . . You, of course, enter into society at Leghorn: should you meet with any scientific person, capable of preparing the *Prussic Acid*, or *essential*

*oil of bitter almonds*, I should regard it as a great kindness if you could procure me a small quantity. . . . I would give any price for this medicine ; you remember we talked of it the other night, and we both expressed a wish to possess it ; my wish was serious, and sprung from the desire of avoiding needless suffering. I need not tell you I have no intention of suicide at present, but I confess it would be a comfort to me to hold in my possession that golden key to the chamber of perpetual rest.—PERCY B. SHELLEY (“Works in Verse and Prose”).

*Prussic acid.*

I never visited his rooms until one o'clock, by which hour, as I rose very early, I had not only attended the college lectures, but had read in private for several hours. I was enabled, moreover, to continue my studies afterwards in the evening, in consequence of a very remarkable peculiarity. My young and energetic friend was then overcome by extreme drowsiness, which speedily and completely vanquished him ; he would sleep from two to four hours, often so soundly that his slumbers resembled a deep lethargy ; he lay occasionally upon the sofa, but more commonly stretched upon the rug before a large fire, like a cat ; and his little round head was exposed to such a fierce heat, that I used to wonder how he was able to bear it.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes I

*Napping on the hearth.*

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's treatment of his head was peculiar. In addition to toasting it before a hot fire, and exposing it, whenever he could, to the hottest rays of the sun, Hogg tells us of another mode of treatment : “The poor, imaginative head was plunged several times a day into a basin full of cold water, which he invariably filled brimful, in order to throw as much water as possible on his feet and the floor.”

*Napping on  
the hearth.*

have interposed some shelter, but rarely with any permanent effect ; for the sleeper usually contrived to turn himself, and to roll again into the spot where the fire glowed the brightest. His torpor was generally profound, but he would sometimes discourse incoherently for a long while in his sleep. At six he would suddenly compose himself, even in the midst of a most animated narrative or of earnest discussion ; and he would lie buried in entire forgetfulness, in a sweet and mighty oblivion, until ten, when he would suddenly start up, and rubbing his eyes with great violence, and passing his fingers swiftly through his long hair, would enter at once into a vehement argument, or begin to recite verses, either of his own composition or from the works of others, with a rapidity and an energy that were often quite painful.--T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*Somnam-  
bulism.*

His systematizing of dreams, and encouraging, if I may so say, the habit of dreaming, . . . revived in him his old somnambulism. As an instance of this, being in Leicester Square one morning at five o'clock, I was attracted by a group of boys collected round a well-dressed person lying near the rails. On coming up to them, my curiosity being excited, I descried Shelley, who had unconsciously spent a part of the night *sub dio*. He could give me no account of how he got there.<sup>1</sup>—THOMAS MEDWIN ("Life of Shelley").

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<sup>1</sup> Medwin gives two other instances of Shelley's somnambulism : one, when he was a school-boy, the other, during his life in Italy.

He took strange caprices, unfounded frights and dislikes, vain apprehensions and panic terrors, and therefore he absented himself from formal and sacred engagements. He was unconscious and oblivious of times, persons, and seasons; and falling into some poetic vision, some day-dream, he quickly and completely forgot all that he had repeatedly and solemnly promised; or he ran away after some object of imaginary urgency and importance, which suddenly came into his head, setting off in vain pursuit of it, he knew not whither.—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*Crotchety  
freaks.*

In a crowded stage-coach Shelley once happened to sit opposite an old woman with very thick legs, who, as he imagined, was afflicted with elephantiasis, an exceedingly rare and most terrible disease, in which the legs swell and become as thick as those of an elephant, together with many other distressing symptoms, as the thickening and cracking of the skin, and indeed a whole Iliad of woes, of which he had recently read a formidable description in some medical work, that had taken entire possession of his fanciful and impressible soul. The patient, quite unconscious of her misery, sat dozing quietly over against him. He also took it into his head that the disease is very infectious, and that he had caught it of his corpulent and drowsy fellow-traveller; he presently began to discover unequivocal symptoms of the fearful contagion in his own person. I never saw him so thoroughly unhappy as he was, whilst he continued under the influence of this strange and unaccountable impression. His

*A hypochondriac  
whim.  
Elephantiasis.*

*A hypochondriac  
whim.  
Elephantiasis.*

female friends tried to laugh him out of this preposterous whim, bantered him and inquired how he came to find out that his fair neighbor had such thick legs? He did not relish, or even understand their jests, but sighed deeply. By the advice of his friends, he was prevailed upon to consult a skilful and experienced surgeon, and submitted to a minute and careful examination: the surgeon of course assured him that no signs or traces of elephantiasis could be discerned. He farther informed him that the disease is excessively rare, almost unknown, in this part of the world; that it is not infectious, and that a person really afflicted by it could not bear to travel in a crowded stage-coach. Bysshe shook his head, sighed more deeply, and was more thoroughly convinced than ever that he was the victim of a cruel and incurable disease; and that these assurances were only given with the humane design of soothing one doomed to a miserable and inevitable death. His imagination was so much disturbed, that he was perpetually examining his own skin, and feeling and looking at that of others. One evening, during the access of his fancied disorder, when many young ladies were standing up for a country dance, he caused a wonderful consternation among these charming creatures by walking slowly along the row of girls and curiously surveying them, placing his eyes close to their necks and bosoms, and feeling their breasts and bare arms, in order to ascertain whether any of the fair ones had taken the horrible disease. He proceeded with so much gravity and seriousness, and his looks were so woe-begone, that they did not resist, or resent, the extraordinary lib-

erties, but looked terrified, and as if they were about to undergo some severe surgical operation at his hands. Their partners were standing opposite in silent and angry amazement, unable to decide in what way the strange manipulations were to be taken; yet nobody interrupted his heart-broken handlings, which seemed, from his dejected air, to be preparatory to cutting his own throat. At last the lady of the house perceived what the young philosopher was about, and by assuring him that not one of the young ladies, as she had herself ascertained, had been infected, and, with gentle expostulations, induced him to desist, and to suffer the dancing to proceed without further examinations.

*A hypochondriac  
whim.  
Elephantiasis.*

The monstrous delusion continued for some days; with the aspect of grim despair he came stealthily and opened the bosom of my shirt several times a day, and minutely inspected my skin, shaking his head, and by his distressed mien plainly signifying that he was not by any means satisfied with the state of my health. He also quietly drew up my sleeves, and by rubbing it investigated the skin of my arms; also measured my legs and ankles, spanning them with a convulsive grasp. "Bysshe, we both have the legs and the skin of an elephant, but neither of us has his sagacity!" He shook his head in sad, silent disapproval; to jest in the very jaws of death was hardened insensibility, not genuine philosophy. . . . This strange fancy continued to afflict him for several weeks, and to divert, or distress, his friends, and then it was forgotten as suddenly as it had been taken up, and gave place to



more cheerful reminiscences or forebodings.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

*A vision.*

The journal of Edward Williams contains the following account of one of the many hallucinations to which, throughout the whole course of his life, Shelley was subject. Portions of this journal were published by Mrs. Shelley and by Richard Garnet; the present extract is made from H. B. Forman's edition of Shelley's works :

*Monday, May 6, 1822.*—After tea, walking with Shelley on the terrace, and observing the effect of moonshine on the waters, he complained of being unusually nervous, and stopping short, he grasped me violently by the arm, and stared steadfastly on the white surf that broke upon the beach under our feet. Observing him sensibly affected, I demanded of him if he were in pain? But he only answered, by saying, “There it is again—there!” He recovered after some time, and declared that he saw, as plainly as he then saw me, a naked child (*the child of a friend who had lately died*) rise from the sea, and clap its hands as in joy, smiling at him. This was a trance that it required some reasoning and philosophy entirely to awaken him from, so forcibly had the vision operated on his mind.

*Sensitive-  
ness.*

Shelley was of an extreme sensibility—of a morbid sensibility—and strange, discordant sounds he could not bear to hear; he shrank from the unmusical voice of the Caledonian maiden.<sup>1</sup> Whenever

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<sup>1</sup> The maid of all work in Shelley's lodging in Edinburgh.



she entered the room, or even came to the door, he rushed wildly into a corner and covered his ears with his hands. We had, to our shame be it spoken, a childish, mischievous delight in tormenting him, and catching the shy virgin and making her speak in his presence. The favorite interrogatory so often administered was, "Have you had your dinner to-day, Christie?" "Yes." "And what did you get?" "Singit heed and bonnocks," was the unvarying answer, and its efficacy was instantaneous and sovereign. Our poor sensitive poet assumed the air of the Distracted Musician, became nearly frantic, and had we been on the promontory, he would certainly have taken the Leucadian leap for Christie's sake, and to escape from the rare music of her voice.—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*Sensitive-  
ness.*

Like many other over-sensitive people, he thought everybody shunned him, whereas it was he who stood aloof. To the few who sought his acquaintance, he was frank, cordial, and if they appeared worthy, friendly in the extreme; but he shrank like a maiden from making the first advances. At the beginning of his literary life, he believed all authors published their opinions as he did his from a deep conviction of their truth and importance, after due investigation. When a new work appeared, on any subject that interested him, he would write to the authors, expressing his opinion of their books, and giving his reasons for his judgment, always arguing logically, and not for display; and, with his serene and imperturbable

*Shyness and  
frankness.*

*Shyness and  
frankness.*

temper, variety of knowledge, tenacious memory, command of language, or rather of all the languages of literature, he was a most subtle critic ; but, as authors are not the meekest or mildest of men, he occasionally met with rude rebuffs, and retired into his own shell.—E. J. TRELAWNY (“Records of Shelley, Byron,” etc.).

*Delicacy of  
mind.*

Though the least effeminate of men, so far as personal or moral courage was concerned, the mind of Shelley was essentially feminine, some would say fastidious in its delicacy; an innate purity which not even the license of college habits and society could corrupt. A fellow-collegian thus writes of him : “Shelley was actually offended, and, indeed, more indignant than would seem to be consistent with the singular mildness of his nature, at a coarse and awkward jest, especially if it were immodest or uncleanly ; in the latter case his anger was unbounded, and his uneasiness pre-eminent.”—ANONYMOUS (“A Graybeard’s Gossip,” *New Monthly Magazine*, 1847).

*In a Pres-  
byterian  
church in  
Edinburgh.*

We reached a place of worship, and entered it with the rest ; it was plain, spacious, and gloomy. We suffered ourselves rather incautiously to be planted side by side, on a bench in the middle of the devout assembly, so that escape was impossible. There was singing, in which all, or almost all, the congregation joined ; it was loud, and discordant, and protracted. There was praying, there was preaching,—both extemporaneous. We prayed for all sorts and conditions of men, more particularly

for our enemies. The preacher discoursed at a prodigious length, repeating many times things which were not worthy to be said once, and threatening us much with the everlasting punishments, which, solemnly and confidently, he declared were in store for us. I never saw Shelley so dejected, so desponding, so despairing ; he looked like the picture of perfect wretchedness ; the poor fellow sighed piteously, as if his heart would break. If they thought that he was conscience-stricken, and that his vast sorrow was for his sins, all, who observed him, must have been delighted with him, as with one filled with the comfortable assurance of eternal perdition. No one present could possibly have comprehended the real nature of his acute sufferings,—could have sympathized in the anguish and agony of a creature of the most poetic temperament that ever was bestowed, for his weal or his woe, upon any human being, at feeling himself in the most unpoetic position in which he could possibly be placed. At last, after expectations many times disappointed of an approaching deliverance, and having been repeatedly deceived by glimpses of an impending discharge, and having long endured that sickness of heart caused by hopes deferred, the tedious worship actually terminated.—T. J. HOGG (“ Life of Shelley ”).

*In a Presbyterian church in Edinburgh.*

No student ever read more assiduously. He was to be found, book in hand, at all hours ; reading in season and out of season ; at table, in bed, and especially during a walk ; not only in the quiet country, and in retired paths ; not only at Oxford, in the

*Reading.*

*Reading.*

public walks, and High Street, but in the most crowded thoroughfares of London. Nor was he less absorbed by the volume that was open before him, in Cheapside, in Cranbourne Alley, or in Bond Street, than in a lonely lane, or a secluded library. . . . I never beheld eyes that devoured the pages more voraciously than his : I am convinced that two-thirds of the period of day and night were often employed in reading. It is no exaggeration to affirm, that out of the twenty-four hours, he frequently read sixteen. . . . Tea and toast were often neglected, his author seldom. . . . He invariably sallied forth, book in hand, reading to himself, if he was alone, if he had a companion, reading aloud. He took a volume to bed with him, and read as long as his candle lasted ; he then slept—impatiently, no doubt—until it was light, and he recommenced reading at the early dawn.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

*Friendly strategy.*

On the evening of a wet day, when we had read with scarcely any intermission from an early hour in the morning, I have urged him to lay aside his book. It required some extravagance to rouse him to join heartily in conversation ; to tempt him to avoid the chimney-piece, on which commonly he had laid the open volume.

“If I were to read as long as you read, Shelley, my hair and my teeth would be strewed about on the floor, and my eyes would slip down my cheeks into my waistcoat pockets ; or at least I should become so weary and nervous that I should not know whether it were so or not.”

He began to scrape the carpet with his feet, as if teeth were actually lying upon it, and he looked fixedly at my face, and his lively fancy represented the empty sockets; his imagination was excited, and the spell that bound him to his books was broken, and creeping close to the fire, and, as it were, under the fireplace, he commenced a most animated discourse.—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*Friendly  
strategy.*

Shelley's thirst for knowledge was unquenchable. He set to work on a book, or a pyramid of books; his eyes glistening with an energy as fierce as that of the most sordid gold-digger who works at a rock of quartz, crushing his way through all impediments, no grain of the pure ore escaping his eager scrutiny. I called on him one morning at ten; he was in his study with a German folio open, resting on the broad marble mantel-piece, over an old-fashioned fireplace, and with a dictionary in his hand. He always read standing if possible. He had promised over night to go with me, but now begged me to let him off. I then rode to Leghorn, eleven or twelve miles distant, and passed the day there; on returning at six in the evening, to dine with Mrs. Shelley and the Williamses, as I had engaged to do, I went into the poet's room, and found him exactly in the position in which I had left him in the morning, but looking pale and exhausted.

*Story of a  
day.*

"Well," I said, "have you found it?"

Shutting the book and going to the window, he replied, "No, I have lost it;" with a deep sigh; "I have lost a day."

"Cheer up, my lad, and come to dinner."

*Story of a  
day.*

Putting his long fingers through his masses of wild tangled hair, he answered faintly, "You go, I have dined—late eating don't do for me."

"What is this?" I asked, as I was going out of the room, pointing to one of his book-shelves with a plate containing bread and cold meat on it.

"That,"—coloring,— "why that must be my dinner. It's very foolish; I thought I had eaten it." Saying I was determined that he should for once have a regular meal, I lugged him into the dining-room, but he brought a book with him, and read more than he ate.—E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron," etc.).

*In the pine  
forest near  
Pisa.*

With no landmarks to guide me, nor sky to be seen above, I was bewildered in this wilderness of pines and ponds; so I sat down, struck a light, and smoked a cigar. A red man would have known his course of the trees themselves, their growth, form, and color; or if a footstep had passed that day, he would have hit upon its trail. As I mused upon his sagacity and my own stupidity, the braying of a brother jackass startled me. He was followed by an old man picking up pine-cones. I asked him if he had seen a stranger.

"L'Inglese malincolico haunts the woods maledetta—I will show you his nest."

As we advanced, the ground swelled into mounds and hollows. By and by the old fellow pointed with his stick to a hat, books, and loose papers lying about, and then to a deep pool of dark glimmering water, saying, "Eccolo!" I thought he meant that Shelley was in or under the water. The careless,

not to say impatient, way in which the poet bore his burden of life, caused a vague dread among his family and friends that he might lose or cast it away at any moment.

*In the pine  
forest near  
Pisa.*

The strong light streamed through the opening of the trees. One of the pines, undermined by the water, had fallen into it. Under its lee, and nearly hidden, sat the poet, gazing below on the dark mirror beneath, so lost in his bardish reverie that he did not hear my approach. There the trees were stunted and bent, and their crowns were shorn like friars by the sea-breezes, excepting a cluster of three, under which Shelley's traps were lying; these overtopped the rest. To avoid startling the poet out of his dream, I squatted under the lofty trees, and opened his books. One was a volume of his favorite Greek dramatist, Sophocles,—the same that I found in his pocket after his death, and the other was a volume of Shakespeare. I then hailed him, and, turning his head, he answered faintly, "Hollo, come in." "Is this your study?" I asked. "Yes," he answered, "and these trees are my books—they tell no lies. You are sitting on the stool of inspiration," he exclaimed. "In those three pines the weird sisters are imprisoned, and this," pointing to the water, "is their caldron of black broth. The Pythian priestesses uttered their oracles from below—now they are muttered from above. Listen to the solemn music in the pine-tops—don't you hear the mournful murmurings of the sea? Sometimes they rave and roar, shriek and howl, like a rabble of priests. In a tempest, when a ship sinks, they catch the despairing groans of the



drowning mariners. Their chorus is the eternal wailing of wretched men."

*In the pine  
forest near  
Pisa.*

"They, like the world," I observed, "seem to take no note of wretched women. The sighs and wailing you talk about are not those of wretched men afar off, but are breathed by a woman near at hand—not from the pine-tops, but by a forsaken lady." "What do you mean?" he asked. "Why, that an hour or two ago I left your wife, Mary Shelley, at the entrance of this grove, in despair at not finding you."

He started up, snatched up his scattered books and papers, thrust them into his hat and jacket pockets, sighing "Poor Mary! hers is a sad fate. Come along; she can't bear solitude, nor I society—the quick coupled with the dead." He glided along with his usual swiftness, for nothing could make him pause for an instant when he had an object in view, until he had attained it.<sup>1</sup> On hearing our voices, Mrs. Shelley joined us; her clear gray eyes and thoughtful brow expressing the love she could not speak. To stop Shelley's self-reproaches, or to hide her own emotions, she began in a bantering tone, chiding and coaxing him; . . .

Shelley, like other students, would, when the spell that bound his faculties was broken, shut his books and indulge in the wildest flights of mirth and folly. As this is a sport all can join in, we talked, and laughed, and shrieked, and shouted, as we

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<sup>1</sup> W. M. Rossetti notes, in his "Talks with Trelawny," "1870, March 11. 'Shelley,' he said, 'was more self-willed than myself;' with exquisite gentleness of manner he would always do, and do on the instant, what he resolved on."



emerged from under the shadows of the melancholy pines and their nodding plumes, into the now cool purple twilight and open country. The cheerful and graceful peasant girls, returning home from the vineyards and olive groves, stopped to look at us. The old man I had met in the morning gathering pine-cones, passed hurriedly by with his donkey, giving Shelley a wide berth, and evidently thinking that the melancholy Englishman had now become a raving maniac.—E. J. TRELAWNY (“Records of Shelley, Byron,” etc.).

*In the pine  
forest near  
L'isa.*

The day I found Shelley in the pine forest, he was writing verses on a guitar. I picked up a fragment, but could only make out the first two lines :

*Methods of  
work.*

“Ariel, to Miranda take  
This slave of music.”

It was in a frightful scrawl ; words smeared out with his finger, and one upon the other, over and over in tiers, and all run together in most “admired disorder ;” it might have been taken for a sketch of a marsh overgrown with bulrushes, and the blots for wild geese ; such a dashed-off daub as self-conceited artists mistake for a manifestation of genius. On my observing this to him, he answered,

“When my brain gets heated with thought, it soon boils, and throws off images and words faster than I can skim them off. In the morning, when cooled down, out of the rude sketch as you justly call it, I shall attempt a drawing. If you ask me why I publish what few or none will care to read, it is that the spirits I have raised haunt me until they

are sent to the devil of a printer. All authors are anxious to breech their bantlings."—E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron," etc.).

*Working  
out of doors.*

Throughout his life Shelley loved to work in the open air. Mrs. Shelley says that "The Revolt of Islam" "was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech-groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighboring country." He wrote "The Cenci" upon the roof of his villa at Leghorn." "The Triumph of Life" was written in his boat, in the Bay of Spezia. In 1880 Trelawny said, in answer to the question, "Did Shelley ever shut himself up to write?" "Shut himself up!" shouted Mr. Trelawny indignantly. "Never! He wrote his poems in the open air; on the sea-shore; in the pine woods; and, like a shepherd, he could tell the time of day exactly by the light. He never had a watch, and I think Byron never had; but, if the latter had one, he never wore it."

*Extempore  
rhyming.*

On one occasion, I remember a remarkable instance of Shelley's facility and exercise of imagination. A word was chosen, and all the rhymes to it in the language, and they were very numerous, set down, without regard to their corresponding meanings, and in a few minutes he filled in the blanks with a beautifully fanciful poem, which, probably, no one preserved, though now I should highly prize such a relic.—THOMAS MEDWIN ("Life of Shelley").

I induced him one evening to accompany me to a representation of the "School for Scandal." When,

after the scenes which exhibited *Charles Surface* in his jollity, the scene returned, in the fourth act, to *Joseph's* library, Shelley said to me,—“I see the purpose of this comedy. It is to associate virtue with bottles and glasses, and villany with books.” I had great difficulty to make him stay to the end. He often talked of the withering and perverting spirit of comedy. I do not think he ever went to another. —T. L. PEACOCK (*Fraser's Magazine*, June, 1858).

*Prejudice  
against  
comedy.*

*November 6, 1817.*—I went to Godwin's. Mr. Shelley was there. I had never seen him before. His youth, and a resemblance to Southey, particularly in his voice, raised a pleasing impression, which was not altogether destroyed by his conversation, though it is vehement, and arrogant, and intolerant. He was very abusive towards Southey, whom he spoke of as having sold himself to the Court. And this he maintained with the usual party slang. . . . Shelley spoke of Wordsworth with less bitterness, but with an insinuation of his insincerity, etc.—HENRY CRABB ROBINSON (“Diary,” etc.).<sup>1</sup>

*Arrogant  
and intoler-  
ant.*

Shelley Haydon met occasionally. His account of their first meeting, in 1816, is characteristic; it was at a dinner—one of the last he went to at Leigh Hunt's. Haydon arrived late and took his place at the table. Opposite to him sat a hectic, spare, intellectual-looking creature, carving a bit of broccoli on his plate as if it were the substantial

*Aggressive  
table-talk.*

<sup>1</sup> Robinson (Henry Crabb). *Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence*. Edited by T. Sadler. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1869.

*Aggressive  
table-talk.*

wing of a chicken. This was Shelley. Suddenly, in the most feminine and gentle voice, Shelley said, "As to that detestable religion, the Christian,"<sup>1</sup>—Haydon looked up. But says he in his diary, "On casting a glance round the table, I easily saw by Leigh Hunt's expression of ecstasy and the simper of the women, I was to be set at that evening 'vi et armis.' I felt exactly like a stag at bay, and I resolved to gore without mercy." The result was a heated and passionate argument.—F. W. HAYDON ("Haydon's Correspondence,"<sup>2</sup> etc.).

*In society.*

I have had the happiness to associate with some of the best specimens of gentlemen ; but with all due deference for those admirable persons (may my candor and my preference be pardoned), I can affirm that Shelley was almost the only example I have yet found that was never wanting, even in the most minute particular, of the infinite and various observances of pure, entire, and perfect gentility.—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

I have seen Shelley and Byron in society, and the contrast was as marked as their characters. The

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Horace Smith, in 1822, Shelley says that if he had any influence with Byron he "should employ it to eradicate from his great mind the delusions of Christianity." He further says, in the same letter : "I differ with Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world ; no man of sense can think it true." See p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> Haydon (Frederick W.). Benjamin Robert Haydon : Correspondence and Table-talk, with a Memoir. 2 vols., 8vo. London, 1876.

former, not thinking of himself, was as much at ease as in his own home, omitting no occasion of obliging those whom he came in contact with, readily conversing with all or any who addressed him, irrespective of age or rank, dress or address. To the first party I went with Byron, as we were on our road, he said, "It's so long since I have been in English society, you must tell me what are their present customs. Does rank lead the way, or does the ambassadress pair us off into the dining-room? Do they ask people to wine? Do we exit with the women, or stick to our claret?" On arriving, he was flushed, fussy, embarrassed, over-ceremonious, and ill at ease, evidently thinking a great deal of himself, and very little of others.—E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron," etc.).

*Contrasted  
with Byron.*

One morning I was in Mrs. Williams' drawing-room. . . . Shelley stood before us with a most woful expression. Mrs. Williams started up, exclaiming, "What's the matter, Percy?" "Mary has threatened me." "Threatened you with what?" He looked mysterious, and too agitated to reply. Mrs. Williams repeated, "With what? to box your ears?" "Oh, much worse than that; Mary says she will have a party; there are English singers here, the Sinclairs, and she will ask them, and every one she or you know—oh, the horror!" We all burst into a laugh except his friend Ned. "It will kill me." "Music kill you!" said Mrs. Williams. "Why, you have told me, you flatterer, that you loved music." "So I do. It's the company that terrifies me. For pity go to Mary and inter-

*Dread of  
bores.*

cede for me ; I will submit to any other species of torture than that of being bored to death by idle ladies and gentlemen."—E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron," etc.).

*Interest in  
national  
affairs.*

Shelley was not only anxious for the good of mankind in general. We have seen what he proposed on the subject of Reform in Parliament,<sup>1</sup> and he was always very desirous of the national welfare. It was a moot point when he entered your room, whether he would begin with some half-pleasant, half-pensive joke, or quote something Greek, or ask some question about public affairs. He once came upon me at Hampstead, when I had not seen him for some time ; and after grasping my hands into both of his, in his usual fervent manner, he sat down, and looked at me very earnestly, with a deep, though not melancholy interest in his face. We were sitting with our knees to the fire, to which we had been getting nearer and nearer, in the comfort of finding ourselves together. The pleasure of seeing him was my only feeling at the moment ; and the air of domesticity about us was so complete, that I thought he was going to speak of some family matter, either his or my own, when he asked me, at the close of an intensity of pause, what was "the amount of the National Debt."

I used to rally him on the apparent inconsequentiality of his manner upon these occasions, and he was always ready to carry on the jest, because he

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<sup>1</sup> He had offered to subscribe one thousand pounds toward founding an association to carry on this work.

said that my laughter did not hinder my being in earnest.—LEIGH HUNT ("Autobiography").

I never could discern in him any more than two fixed principles. The first was a strong irrepres-  
sible love of liberty ; of liberty in the abstract, and somewhat after the pattern of the ancient republics, without reference to the English constitution, respecting which he knew little and cared nothing, heeding it not at all. The second was an equally ardent love of toleration of all opinions ; of toleration, complete, entire, universal, unlimited ; and, as a deduction and corollary from which latter principle, he felt an intense abhorrence of persecution of every kind, public or private.—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*Liberty and  
toleration.*

Although the mind of Shelley had certainly a strong bias towards democracy, and he embraced with an ardent and youthful fondness the theory of political equality, his feelings and behavior were in many respects highly aristocratical. . . . As a politician, Shelley was in theory wholly a republican, but in practice, so far only as it is possible to be one with due regard for the sacred rights of a scholar and a gentleman ; and these being in his eyes always more inviolable than any scheme of polity, or civil institution, although he was upon paper and in discourse a sturdy commonwealth man, the living, moving, acting individual, had much of the senatorial and conservative, and was, in the main, eminently patrician.—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*Political  
views.*

*A search  
for evi-  
dence.*

One Sunday we had been reading Plato together so diligently that the usual hour of exercise passed away unperceived ; we sallied forth hastily to take the air for half an hour before dinner. In the middle of Magdalen Bridge we met a woman with a child in her arms. Shelley was more attentive at that instant to our conduct in a life that was past, or to come, than to a decorous regulation of the present, according to the established usages of society, in that fleeting moment of eternal duration, styled the nineteenth century. With abrupt dexterity he caught hold of the child. The mother, who might well fear that it was about to be thrown over the parapet of the bridge into the sedgy waters below, held it fast by its long train.

“Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam ?” he asked in a piercing voice, and with a wistful look.

The mother made no answer, but perceiving that Shelley’s object was not murderous, but altogether harmless, she dismissed her apprehension, and relaxed her hold.

“Will your baby tell us anything about pre-existence, Madam !” he repeated with unabated earnestness.

“He cannot speak, Sir,” said the mother seriously.

“Worse and worse,” cried Shelley, with an air of deep disappointment, shaking his long hair most pathetically about his young face ; “but surely the babe can speak if he will, for he is only a few weeks old. He may fancy perhaps that he cannot, but it is only a silly whim ; he cannot have forgotten entirely the use of speech in so short a time ; the thing is absolutely impossible.”

*Investigat-  
ing pre-  
existence.*



"It is not for me to dispute with you, gentlemen," the woman meekly replied, her eye glancing at our academical garb; "but I can safely declare that I never heard him speak, nor any child, indeed, of his age."

*Investigating pre-existence.*

It was a fine, placid boy; so far from being disturbed by the interruption, he looked up and smiled. Shelley pressed his fat cheeks with his fingers, we commended his healthy appearance and his equanimity, and the mother was permitted to proceed, probably to her satisfaction, for she would doubtless prefer a less speculative nurse. Shelley sighed deeply as we walked on. "How provokingly close are those new-born babes!" he ejaculated; "but it is not the less certain, notwithstanding the cunning attempts to conceal the truth, that all knowledge is reminiscence; the doctrine is far more ancient than the times of Plato, and as old as the venerable allegory that the Muses are the daughters of Memory; not one of the nine was ever said to be the child of Invention!"—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

Never was there a more unexceptionable disputant; he was eager beyond the most ardent, but never angry and never personal; he was the only arguer I ever knew who drew every argument from the nature of the thing, and who could never be provoked to descend to personal contention. He was fully inspired, indeed, with the whole spirit of the true logician; the more obvious and indisputable the proposition which his opponent undertook to maintain, the more complete was the triumph of his art if he could refute and prevent him.—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*A good disputant.*

*A passing  
fancy.*

*A peculiar  
view of  
Christian-  
ity.*

He had many schemes of life. Amongst them all, the most singular that ever crossed his mind was that of entering the church. Whether he had ever thought of it before, or whether it only arose on the moment, I cannot say: the latter is most probable; but I well remember the occasion. We were walking in the early summer through a village where there was a good vicarage house, with a nice garden, and the front wall of the vicarage was covered with corchorus in full flower, a plant less common then than it has since become. He stood some time admiring the vicarage wall. The extreme quietness of the scene, the pleasant pathway through the village churchyard, and the brightness of the summer morning, apparently concurred to produce the impression under which he suddenly said to me,—“I feel strongly inclined to enter the church.” “What,” I said, “to become a clergyman with your ideas of the faith?” “Assent to the supernatural part of it,” he said, “is merely technical. Of the moral doctrines of Christianity I am a more decided disciple than many of its more ostentatious professors. And consider for a moment how much good a good clergyman may do. In his teaching as a scholar and a moralist; in his example as a gentleman and a man of regular life; in the consolation of his personal intercourse and of his charity among the poor. . . . It is an admirable institution which admits the possibility of diffusing such men over the surface of the land. And am I to deprive myself of the advantages of this admirable institution because there are certain technicalities to which I cannot give my adhesion, but

which I need not bring prominently forward?" I told him I thought he would find more restraint in the office than would suit his aspirations. He walked on some time thoughtfully, then started another subject, and never returned to that of entering the church.—T. L. PEACOCK (*Fraser's Magazine*, June, 1858).

*A peculiar  
view of  
Christian-  
ity.*

The Williamses received me in their earnest, cordial manner ; we had a great deal to communicate to each other, and were in loud and animated conversation, when I was rather put out by observing in the passage near the open door, opposite to where I sat, a pair of glittering eyes steadily fixed on mine ; it was too dark to make out whom they belonged to. With the acuteness of a woman, Mrs. Williams's eyes followed the direction of mine, and going to the doorway she laughingly said,

*Captain  
Trevelyan  
meets Shel-  
ley at Pisa.*

"Come in, Shelley, it's only our friend Tre just arrived."

Swiftly gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall, thin stripling held out both his hands ; and although I could hardly believe as I looked at his flushed, feminine, and artless face that it could be the poet, I returned his warm pressure. After the ordinary greetings and courtesies he sat down and listened. I was silent with astonishment : was it possible this mild-looking beardless boy could be the veritable monster at war with all the world?—excommunicated by the Fathers of the Church, deprived of his civil rights by the fiat of a grim Lord Chancellor, discarded by every member of his family, and denounced by the rival sages of our literature as the

*Captain  
Trelawny  
meets Shel-  
ley at Pisa.*

founder of a Satanic school? I could not believe it; it must be a hoax. He was habited like a boy, in a black jacket and trousers, which he seemed to have outgrown, or his tailor, as is the custom, had most shamefully stinted him in his "sizings." Mrs. Williams saw my embarrassment, and to relieve me asked Shelley what book he had in his hand? His face brightened, and he answered briskly, "Calderon's 'Magico Prodigioso,' I am translating some passages in it."

"Oh, read it to us!"

Shoved off from the shore of commonplace incidents that could not interest him, and fairly launched on a theme that did, he instantly became oblivious of everything but the book in his hand. The masterly manner in which he analyzed the genius of the author, his lucid interpretation of the story, and the ease with which he translated into our language the most subtle and imaginative passages of the Spanish poet, were marvellous, as was his command of the two languages. After this touch of his quality I no longer doubted his identity; a dead silence ensued; looking up, I asked,

"Where is he?"

Mrs. Williams said, "Who? Shelley? Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows when or where."—E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron," etc.).

Here he wrote the *Revolt of Islam*, and *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote through the Country*.

. . . He used to sit in a study adorned with casts as large as life of the Vatican Apollo and the celes-

tial Venus. Between whiles he would walk in the garden, or take strolls about the country, or a sail in a boat. . . . Flowers, or the sight of a happy face, or the hearing of a congenial remark would make his eyes sparkle with delight. At other times he would suddenly droop into an aspect of dejection, particularly when a wretched face passed by him. . . . He rose early in the morning, walked and read before breakfast, took that meal sparingly, wrote and studied the greater part of the morning, walked and read again, dined on vegetables (for he took neither meat nor wine), conversed with his friends (to whom his house was ever open), again walked out, and usually finished with reading to his wife till ten o'clock, when he went to bed. This was his daily existence. His book was generally Plato, or Homer, or one of the Greek tragedians, or the Bible, in which last he took a great, though peculiar, and often admiring interest. One of his favorite parts was the book of Job.—LEIGH HUNT ("Autobiography").

*Life at  
Great Mar-  
low, in  
1817.*

On returning to Pisa I found the two poets going through the same routine of habits they had adopted before my departure; the one getting out of bed after noon, dawdling about until two or three, following the same road on horseback, stopping at the same Podere, firing his pop-guns, and retracing his steps at the same slow pace;—his frugal dinner followed by his accustomed visit to an Italian family, and then—the midnight lamp, and the immortal verses. The other was up at six or seven, reading Plato, Sophocles, or Spinoza, with

*Shelley and  
Byron at  
Pisa.*

*Shelley and  
Byron at  
Pisa.*

the accompaniment of a hunch of dry bread ; then he joined Williams in a sail on the Arno, in a flat-bottomed skiff, book in hand, and from thence he went to the pine forest, or some out-of-the-way place. When the birds went to roost he returned home, and talked and read until midnight. The monotony of this life was only broken at long intervals by the arrival of some old acquaintances of Byron's.—E. J. TRELAWNY ("Records of Shelley, Byron," etc.).

*The tribute  
of a contem-  
porary.*

Innocent and careless as a boy, he possessed all the delicate feelings of a gentleman, all the discrimination of a scholar, and united, in just degrees, the ardor of the poet with the patience and forbearance of the philosopher. His generosity and charity went far beyond those of any man (I believe) at present in existence. He was never known to speak evil of an enemy, unless that enemy had done some grievous injustice to another ; and he divided his income of only one thousand pounds with the fallen and the afflicted. This is the man against whom such clamors have been raised by the religious and the loyal, and by those who live and lap under their tables.—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR ("Imaginary Conversations").<sup>1</sup>

On our way to Covent-Garden, I expressed my surprise and dissatisfaction at our strange visit,<sup>2</sup> and I learned that when he came to London before, in the course of the summer, some old man had re-

<sup>1</sup> Landor (Walter Savage). Works. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1846. (*The passage quoted above does not appear in the later edition, 8 vols., 8vo. London, 1876.*)

<sup>2</sup> Shelley had taken his friend to a pawn-broker's shop.

lated to him a tale of distress,—of a calamity which could only be alleviated by the timely application of ten pounds ; five of them he drew at once from his pocket, and to raise the other five he had pawned his beautiful solar microscope ! He related this act of beneficence simply and briefly, as if it were a matter of course, and such it was indeed to him.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

*Pawns his  
microscope.*

As an instance of Shelley's extraordinary generosity, a friend of his, a man of letters, enjoyed from him . . . a pension of a hundred a year, though he had but a thousand of his own, and he continued to enjoy it till fortune rendered it superfluous. But the princeliness of his disposition was seen most in his behavior to another friend, the writer of this memoir, who is proud to relate, that with money raised by an effort, Shelley once made him a present of fourteen hundred pounds, to extricate him from debt. I was not extricated, for I had not yet learned to be careful : but the shame of not being so, after such generosity, and the pain which my friend afterward underwent when I was in trouble and he was helpless, were the first causes of my thinking of money-matters to any purpose. His last sixpence was ever at my service, had I chosen to share it.—LEIGH HUNT (“Autobiography”).

*Generosity.*

Music affected him deeply. He had also a delicate perception of the beauties of sculpture. It is not one of the least evidences of his conscientious turn of mind, that, with the inclination and the power to surround himself in Italy with all the

*Generous  
self-denial.*

graces of life, he made no sort of attempt that way; finding other uses for his money, and not always satisfied with himself for indulging even in the luxury of a boat. When he bought elegancies of any kind, it was to give away. Boating was his great amusement. He loved the mixture of action and repose which he found in it; and delighted to fancy himself gliding away to Utopian isles, and bowers of enchantment. But he would give up any pleasure to do a deed of kindness. Indeed, he may be said to have made the whole comfort of his life a sacrifice to what he thought the wants of society.—LEIGH HUNT (“Autobiography”).

*Instances of  
his generos-  
ity.*

The following summary of instances of Shelley's generosity is taken from J. A. Symonds's recent volume upon Shelley, in the “English Men of Letters” series: <sup>1</sup>—“Peacock received from him an annual allowance of 100*l.* He gave Leigh Hunt, on one occasion, 1400*l.*; and he discharged debts of Godwin, amounting, it is said, to about 6000*l.* In his pamphlet on *Putting Reform to the Vote*, he offered to subscribe 100*l.* for the purpose of founding an association; and . . . he headed the Tremadoc subscription with a sum of 500*l.* These instances of his generosity might be easily multiplied; and when we remember that his present income was 1000*l.*, out of which 200*l.* went to the support of his children, it will be understood not only that he could not live luxuriously, but also that he was in

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<sup>1</sup> Symonds (John Addington). Shelley. 12mo. London and New York, 1879. (English Men of Letters. Ed. by J. Morley.)



frequent money difficulties through the necessity of raising funds upon his expectations. His self-denial in all minor matters of expenditure was conspicuous."

*Instances of  
his generos-  
ity.*

Shelley married the daughter of Mr. Godwin, and resided at Great Marlow in Buckinghamshire, where my family and myself paid him a visit, and where he was a blessing to the poor. His charity, though liberal, was not weak. He inquired personally into the circumstances of his petitioners; visited the sick in their beds (for he had gone the rounds of the hospitals on purpose to be able to practise on occasion), and kept a regular list of industrious poor, whom he assisted with small sums to make up their accounts.—LEIGH HUNT ("Autobiography").

*Practical  
charity.*

Shelley tended me like a brother. He applied my leeches, administered my medicines, and during six weeks that I was confined to my room, was assiduous and unintermitting in his affectionate care of me.—THOMAS MEDWIN ("Life of Shelley").

I was returning home one night to Hampstead after the opera. As I approached the door, I heard strange and alarming shrieks, mixed with the voice of a man. The next day it was reported by the gossips that Mr. Shelley, no Christian (for it was he who was there) had brought some "very strange female" into the house, no better of course, than she ought to be. The real Christian had puzzled them. Shelley, in coming to our house that night, had found a woman lying near the top of the hill in fits.

*The poor  
woman at  
Hampstead.*

*The poor  
woman at  
Hampstead*

It was a fierce winter night, with snow upon the ground ; and winter loses nothing of its fierceness at Hampstead. My friend, always the promptest as well as most pitying on these occasions, knocked at the first houses he could reach, in order to have the woman taken in. The invariable answer, was, that they could not do it. He asked for an outhouse to put her in, while he went for a doctor. Impossible ! In vain he assured them that she was no impostor. . . . The woman was then brought to our house, which was at some distance, and down a bleak path. . . . The doctor said that she would have perished had she lain a short time longer.—LEIGH HUNT (“Autobiography”).

*One, yet  
many.*

We must learn to think of Shelley not merely as gentle, dreamy, unworldly, imprudently disinterested, and ideally optimistic—though he was all this—but likewise as swift, prompt, resolute, irascible, strong-limbed and hardy, often very practical in his views of politics, and endowed with preternatural keenness of observation. There is but one formula for combining and harmonizing these apparent discrepancies : he was an elemental force whose essence is simplicity itself, but whose modes of operation are many and various. If we study the divers ways in which those who shared his society have striven to express that which they have felt to be inexpressible, we shall find that in the last analysis all amount to this.—RICHARD GARNETT (*Fortnightly Review*, June, 1878).

NOTE.—Some particulars of Shelley’s intercourse with Southey will be found on pp. 240–244.

THOMAS MOORE.

1779-1852.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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MEN agree about Moore almost as thoroughly as they differ about Byron and Shelley. Here at least there was no mystery. Brilliant, jovial, kindly ; frivolous, yet hysterically sensitive ; in principle a Whig, in practice a worshipper of aristocracy ; a Roman Catholic, but not a bigot ; free—loose even—in speech and with pen, yet clean in the conduct of his life ; a fond husband, yet always quite prepared to sacrifice his wife's enjoyment to his own—all this, and more, was readily discerned by those who watched this airy little fellow “who wore his heart upon his sleeve.”

He fluttered gayly through life, winning the admiration and applause which he craved, and bearing hardship with a good grace. In common with most sentimentalists, he was very selfish ; but his nature was so superficial, and his egotism was so fully developed, that it may well be doubted if he ever suspected that selfishness might be one of his failings. His amiability, and his many engaging, and even fascinating qualities, secured him a host of friends ; and he can but seldom have inspired any feeling harsher than a good-humored contempt for the weaknesses which were obvious to all.

The chief authority upon Moore's life is his own journal, edited by Lord John Russell. This is one of the most exhausting books in our language ; eight tedious volumes, overflowing with egotism and triviality. Information about him is to be found in many books written by his contemporaries, among which may be noted, S. C. Hall's "Book of Memories ;" N. P. Willis's "Pencillings by the Way ;" Julian Charles Young's "Memoir of C. M. Young ;" the Countess of Blessington's "Conversations of Lord Byron ;" and Leigh Hunt's "Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries."

#### LEADING EVENTS OF MOORE'S LIFE.

1779. Born, May 28th, in Dublin.
- 1794.—(Aged 15.) Enters Dublin University.
- 1799.—(Aged 20.) A law student in the Middle Temple, London.
- 1800.—(Aged 21.) Publishes a translation of the "Odes of Anacreon."
- 1801.—(Aged 22.) Publishes "Poems by Thomas Little."
- 1803.—(Aged 24.) Goes to Bermuda, upon a government appointment.
- 1804.—(Aged 25.) Travels in the United States. Returns to England.
- 1806.—(Aged 27.) Begins the composition of his "Irish Melodies."
- 1811.—(Aged 32.) Marries Miss Elizabeth Dyke.
- 1817.—(Aged 38.) Publishes "Lalla Rookh." Takes Sloperton Cottage.
- 1819.—(Aged 40.) Travels on the Continent with Lord John Russell.
- 1825.—(Aged 46.) Publishes the "Life of Sheridan."
- 1830.—(Aged 51.) Publishes the "Life of Byron."
- 1835.—(Aged 56.) Receives a pension of three hundred pounds per annum.
- 1852.—(Aged 72 years, 9 months.) Dies, February 25th.

NOTE.—Lord John Russell edited Moore's "Diary," and stated therein that Moore was born in 1779. The same date was engraved upon the poet's tombstone. If these were errors, it is probable that they would have been corrected at the time by Mrs. Moore, or by others who were able to speak with authority. No such correction was made, although there was one error of Lord Russell's which Mrs. Moore took pains to set right: Lord R. gave February 26th, as the day of Moore's death, but Mrs. Moore stated that he died upon February 25th. It would seem, then, as if the date of Moore's birth was pretty definitely settled. Nevertheless, there are several writers, who assert that Moore was born in 1780. This assertion is based upon a baptismal register, which gives 1780 as the date of Moore's baptism. This, however, is not conclusive evidence, and does not touch the point at issue; for who can tell us what length of time elapsed between the birth and the record of baptism? In the absence of definite proof that baptism immediately followed birth, this record cannot be legitimately used to establish a date subsequent to the one generally received as correct. The weight of evidence is in favor of 1779. The safe rule in regard to baptismal registers is, that they may be trusted to establish priority, but not subsequence of date.





## THOMAS MOORE.

HE was a sort of "show-child" from his birth, and could hardly walk when it was jestingly said of him that he passed all his nights with fairies on the hills. "He lisped in numbers for the numbers came." Almost his earliest memory was his having been crowned king of a castle by some of his playfellows. At his first school he was the show-boy of the schoolmaster; at thirteen years old he had written poetry that attracted and justified admiration. In 1798, at the age of nineteen he had made "considerable progress" in translating the Odes of Anacreon.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").<sup>1</sup>

*Precocity.*

I recall him at this moment,—his small form and intellectual face, rich in expression, and that expression the sweetest, the most gentle, and the kindest. He had still in age the same bright and clear eye, the same gracious smile, the same suave and winning manner, I had noticed as the attributes of his comparative youth: a forehead not remarkably broad or high, but singularly impressive, firm, and

*Personal  
appearance.*

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<sup>1</sup> Hall (Samuel C.). A Book of Memories of Great Men and Women of the Age. 4to. London, 1876.

*Personal  
appearance.*

full. . . . The nose . . . was somewhat upturned. Standing or sitting, his head was invariably upraised, owing, perhaps, mainly to his shortness of stature. . . . His hair was, at the time I speak of (in his sixty-fifth year), thin and very grey, and he wore his hat with the "jaunty" air that has been often remarked as a peculiarity of the Irish. In dress, although far from slovenly, he was by no means particular.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

His forehead is bony and full of character, with "bumps" of wit, large and radiant enough to transport a phrenologist. His eyes are as dark and fine, as you would wish to see under a set of vine-leaves; his mouth generous and good-humored, with dimples; his nose sensual, prominent, and at the same time the reverse of aquiline. There is a very peculiar character in it, as if it were looking forward, and scenting a feast or an orchard. The face, upon the whole, is Irish, not unruffled with care and passion, but festivity is the prominent expression.—LEIGH HUNT ("Lord Byron and his Contemporaries").

To see him only at table, you would think him not a small man. His principal length is in his body, and his head and shoulders are those of a much larger person. Consequently he *sits tall*, and with the peculiar erectness of head and neck, his diminutiveness disappears. . . . Moore's head is distinctly before me as I write, but I shall find it difficult to describe. His hair, which curled once all over it in long tendrils, unlike anybody else's in

the world, and which probably suggested his *sobriquet* of "Bacchus," is diminished now to a few curls sprinkled with grey, and scattered in a single ring above his ears. His forehead is wrinkled, with the exception of a most prominent development of the organ of gaiety, which, singularly enough, shines with the lustre and smooth polish of a pearl, and is surrounded by a semicircle of lines drawn close about it, like entrenchments against Time. His eyes still sparkle like a champagne bubble, though the invader has drawn his pencillings about the corners; and there is a kind of wintry red, of the tinge of an October leaf, that seems enamelled on his cheek, the eloquent record of the claret his wit has brightened. His mouth is the most characteristic feature of all. The lips are delicately cut, slight and changeable as an aspen; but there is a set-up look about the lower lip, a determination of the muscle to a particular expression, and you fancy that you can almost see wit astride upon it. It is written legibly with the imprint of habitual success. It is arch, confident, and half diffident, as if he were disguising his pleasure at applause, while another bright gleam of fancy was breaking on him. The slightly tossed nose confirms the fun of the expression, and altogether it is a face that sparkles, beams, radiates,—everything but *feels*. Fascinating beyond all men as he is, Moore looks like a worldling.—N. P. WILLIS ("Pencillings by the Way").<sup>1</sup>

*Personal  
appearance.*

Nothing but a short-hand report could retain the

<sup>1</sup> Willis (Nathaniel P.). *Pencillings by the Way*. 12mo. New York: Charles Scribner, 1853.

*Voice and  
conversa-  
tion.*

delicacy and elegance of Moore's language, and memory itself cannot embody again the kind of frost-work of imagery, which was formed and melted on his lips. His voice is soft or firm as the subject requires, but perhaps the word *gentlemanly* describes it better than any other. It is upon a natural key, but, if I may so phrase it, it is *fused* with a high-bred affectation, expressing deference and courtesy, at the same time, that its pauses are constructed peculiarly to catch the ear. It would be difficult not to attend to him, though the subject were but the shape of a wine-glass.—N. P. WILLIS ("Pencillings by the Way").

I must say, Moore's tone, in conversation, is perfect. He appears to me to be as well bred as if he had been born in the circle in which he moves, and in which he is treated by the highest as their peer. He is not devoid of self-complacency—it would be odd if he were—but it is not an offensive self-complacency : it is innocent and innocuous. He knows his gifts ; and if he did not, all the fine ladies of London have done their best to enlighten him on that point.—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young," etc.).<sup>1</sup>

"I never spent an hour with Moore," said Byron, "without being ready to apply to him the expression attributed to Aristophanes, 'You have spoken

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<sup>1</sup> Young (Julian Charles). A Memoir of Charles M. Young, Tragedian, with Extracts from his Son's Journal. 12mo. London and New York, 1871.

roses ;' his thoughts and expressions have all the beauty and freshness of those flowers, but the piquancy of his wit, and the readiness of his repartees, prevent one's ear being cloyed by too much sweets, and one cannot 'die of a rose in aromatic pain' with Moore ; though he does speak roses, there is such an endless variety in his conversation. Moore is the only poet I know," continued Byron, "whose conversation equals his writings ; he comes into society with a mind as fresh and buoyant as if he had not expended such a multiplicity of thoughts on paper ; and leaves behind him an impression that he possesses an inexhaustible mine equally brilliant as the specimens he has given us. . . . Moore is a delightful companion, gay without being boisterous, witty without effort, comic without coarseness, and sentimental without being lachrymose. . . . My *tête à tête* suppers with Moore are among the most agreeable impressions I retain of the hours passed in London. . . . I have known a dull man live on a *bon mot* of Moore's for a week."—LADY BLESSINGTON ("Conversations of Lord Byron").

*Conversa-  
tion and  
social gifts.*

I was very much struck by his conversation. It was brilliant and sparkling in the highest degree, abounding in those Eastern images and poetical thoughts which appear with such lustre in his "Lalla Rookh" and "Irish Melodies," mingled with quick repartee and rapid interchange of ideas acquired in the highest and most intellectual London society. It was easy to see that he was thoroughly a poet ; perhaps a little spoilt by the

*Conversa-  
tion.*

*Conversa-  
tion.*

adulation he had met with from the most intoxicating of all quarters, that of elegant young women of fashion. Delightful and sociable, when he continued, as he generally was, the idol of the circle, he was apt to be pettish if another shared its attention, and in an especial manner to be jealous of the admiration of young ladies.—SIR A. ALISON (“Autobiography”).

*Singing his  
own songs.*

He makes no attempt at music. It is a kind of admirable recitative, in which every shade of thought is syllabled and dwelt upon, and the sentiment of the song goes through your blood, warming you to the very eyelids, and starting your tears, if you have a soul or sense in you.—N. P. WILLIS (“Pencilings by the Way”).

His journals curiously indicate what I repeatedly witnessed in my own house and elsewhere, his morbid sensitiveness, when singing his Irish ballads, to the effect they produced on those around him. In the most touching passages his eye was wandering round the room, scrutinizing jealously the influence of his song.—SIR HENRY HOLLAND (“Recollections”).

He had but little voice, yet he sang with a depth of sweetness that charmed all hearers; it was true melody, and told upon the heart as well as the ear. No doubt much of this charm was derived from association, for it was only his own melodies he sang.—S. C. HALL (“Retrospect”).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hall (Samuel Carter). *Retrospect of a Long Life*. 8vo. London and New York, 1833.

“Mr. Moore!” cried the footman at the bottom of the staircase, “Mr. Moore!” cried the footman at the top. And with his glass at his eye, stumbling over an ottoman between his near-sightedness and the darkness of the room, enter the poet. Half a glance tells you that he is at home on a carpet. Sliding his little feet up to Lady Blessington, . . . he made his compliments, with a gaiety and an ease combined with a kind of worshipping deference, that was worthy of a prime-minister at the court of love. With the gentlemen, all of whom he knew, he had the frank, merry manner of a confident favorite, and he was greeted like one. He went from one to the other, straining back his head to look up at them (for, singularly enough, every gentleman in the room was six feet high and upward), and to every one he said something which, from any one else, would have seemed peculiarly felicitous, but which fell from his lips, as if his breath was not more spontaneous.—N. P. WILLIS (“Pencillings by the Way”).

*A dinner at  
Lady Bless-  
ington's in  
1835.*

No one can read his poems, or see his deportment in female society, without feeling that his admiration, not exclusively for beauty, but for the sex, is intense. I verily believe that, were his doctor to prescribe for him a twelve-months' course of rigid abstinence from female society, the result would be as injurious to his health as it would be for one addicted to dram-drinking to be ordered suddenly to take the tee-total pledge. Although fondly attached to his wife, and with none of the lower propensities which detracted so much from the nobler qualities

*Gallantry.*

*Gallantry.*

of Byron, it cannot be denied that, for many a year, he has lived in a state, more or less feverish, of chronic flirtation :

“ From beauty still to beauty ranging,  
In every face he found a dart.”

—J. C. YOUNG (“Memoir of Charles M. Young, etc.”).

*Crawling  
for society.*

I do not fancy that he is a self-sufficing man. I doubt his being content, like Cowper, to live alone, “in some vast wilderness, some boundless contiguity of shade.” . . . His social instincts are too pronounced and too gregarious for seclusion to be otherwise than distasteful to him. . . . The drawing-room is the sphere in which he shines the brightest. What with his singing and his conversational power, and his winning and deferential address, he is captivating (1836).—J. C. YOUNG (“Memoir of C. M. Young”).

Byron said to Lady Blessington, as she records in her “Conversations of Lord Byron,” “The great defect in my friend Tom is a sort of fidgety unsettledness, that prevents his giving himself up, *con amore*, to any one friend, because he is apt to think he might be more happy with another ; he has the organ of locomotiveness largely developed, as a phrenologist would say, and would like to be at three places at once.”

*“ Tommy  
loves a  
lord.”*

His estimates of persons seemed to depend much on their position or rank ; he did not trouble himself to discuss persons who had no rank at all. In his diary or letters, published in Lord John Russell’s memoir, he speaks of being present at two dinners,



viz., at one where the company consisted of "some curious people" (I think that is the phrase), namely, Wordsworth, Lamb, Southey, etc., and at the other, where he met a "distinguished circle," consisting of Lord A., Lord B., Lord C., etc., all of whom are now duly forgotten. "Tommy loves a lord," as Lord Byron said of him.—B. W. PROCTER ("Autobiographical Fragment").<sup>1</sup>

"Tommy  
loves a  
lord."

A remark was made,<sup>2</sup> in rather a satirical tone, upon Moore's worldliness and passion for rank. "He was sure," it was said, "to have four or five invitations to dine on the same day, and he tormented himself with the idea that he had not accepted perhaps the most exclusive. He would get off from an engagement with a Countess to dine with a Marchioness, and from a Marchioness to accept the later invitation of a Duchess; and as he cared little for the society of men, and would sing and be delightful only for the applause of women, it mattered little whether one circle was more talented than another. Beauty was one of his passions, but rank and fashion were all the rest." This rather left-handed portrait was confessed by all to be just, Lady B. herself making no comment upon it.—N. P. WILLIS ("Pencilings by the Way").

Beauty,  
rank, and  
fashion his  
chief joys.

There is a *naïveté* about his vanity, which, though it may cause a smile, does not nettle the *amour propre*

<sup>1</sup> Procter (Bryan W.). Autobiographical Fragment, and Biographical Notes, with Sketches of Contemporaries, etc. Ed. by Coventry Patmore. 12mo. London, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> At an assembly at Lady Blessington's house.

*Vanity.*

of others to whom it is frankly exposed. I remember an instance of it in point. One morning, at breakfast, at Bowood, he mentioned that, when Lockhart was engaged in writing his father-in-law's life, he received a letter from him, requesting him to be kind enough to write for him, for publication, his impression of Sir Walter Scott's ability as a poet and novelist, and his moral and social qualities as a man. He said he had had great pleasure in complying with Lockhart's wish; and had paid an ungrudging tribute of respect to the great and good man's memory: though he owned to having been much mortified at being unable to find an excuse for introducing a word about himself.

He mentioned that there was one circumstance connected with his visit to Scott of which he was longing to tell, but which, from a feeling that there ought to be no rival by the side of the principal figure on his canvas, he reluctantly withdrew—viz., the unparalleled reception awarded to himself at the Edinburgh theatre, when accompanying Walter Scott there. "Although," he said, "I merely went under Scott's wing, and as his guest, and though Scott at the time was the national idol, the moment we appeared, I heard my name cried out. It spread like wildfire through the house. He was nowhere; and I was cheered and applauded to the very echo. When the *Life*, however, came out, I was rewarded for my self-denial by finding that Lockhart himself had done ample justice to the scene."<sup>1</sup>—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young," etc.).

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<sup>1</sup> Moore took care to give a full account of this event in his Diary—which was undoubtedly written for publication.

Moore, unquestionably, was of the sanguine temperament, and, without disparagement to his manliness, as hysterical as a woman. That he was quickly moved to smiles, any one who has witnessed his surpassing sense of the ludicrous will readily acknowledge ; that he was as quickly moved to tears, the following incident will prove.

*Morbid sensibility.*

(Mr. Young proceeds to relate, at too great length for quotation, that, at Bowood, the home of Lord Lansdowne, in 1838, a large party was assembled, Moore being one of the guests. Upon this occasion the young widow of the heir of the family, had been induced to make her first appearance in society, since the death of her husband. The story continues as follows :)

The piano was wheeled into the middle of the room. He took up his position on the music stool, and the Duchess of Sunderland planted herself on a chair by his side. . . . He happened to be in good voice and high feather. He was evidently flattered by the marked attention with which the Duchess listened to him ; held his head higher than ever in the air, and sang song after song with faultless articulation and touching expression. All his airs were more or less pathetic. . . . During an interval, . . . the Duke of Sutherland crossed the room, and coming up to Moore, asked him to sing a song for him, of which he had the most agreeable recollection. . . .

*Music and hysterics.*

“There’s a song of the olden time  
Falling sad o’er the ear,  
Like the notes of some village chime  
Which in youth we loved to hear.”

*Music and  
hysterics.*

When he had proceeded with the strain thus far, he happened to turn his head from the Duchess, and glance at the widow. The instant he saw her lovely, sorrow-stricken face, with an abruptness that was fearful, he shrieked aloud, and fell flat on his face to the ground, in violent hysterics. Not a soul moved towards him, except Lord and Lady Lansdowne, who raised him with difficulty from the ground, supported him into the adjoining room, and closed the door. The most embarrassing silence reigned through the drawing-room—a silence only broken by the alternate sobs and laughter of the poet from the next room.—J. C. YOUNG (“Memoir of Charles M. Young” etc.).

*In old age.*

The last time I saw Moore was when I was staying in Stratton Street with Miss B. Coutts. This was shortly before his last illness. He called and lunched, and Miss Coutts asked him to stay and dine. Charles Dickens was there that day; and Moore, who had been buoyant and delightful before he came, became taciturn and sulky after. When he had gone, Moore, evidently contrasting the then reputation of Dickens with his own past celebrity, spoke to me with much chagrin of the fickleness of public opinion and the instability of literary reputation. He said, “I dare say Dickens is pointed out as ‘Boz’ wherever he goes. So was I once pointed out as ‘Tom Little.’ I can’t say how sad I feel when I go to the opera *now*. I take up my lorgnette and see no one I know, or who knows me. Twenty years ago I flitted from box to box, like a butterfly from flower to flower. Go where I

would I was greeted with smiles. I could not pass through the lobby of a theatre without hearing people whisper as I passed, 'That is Tom Moore.' *Now*, no one knows me, and no one cares for me. *Telle est la vie*, Heigho!"—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of Charles M. Young," etc.).

*In old age.*

D'Israeli regretted that he should have been met, exactly on his return to London, with the savage but clever article in *Fraser's Magazine*, on his plagiarisms. "Give yourself no trouble about that," said Lady Blessington, "for you may be sure he will never see it. Moore guards against the sight and knowledge of criticism as people take precautions against the plague. He reads few periodicals, and but one newspaper. If a letter comes to him from a suspicious quarter, he burns it unopened. If a friend mentions a criticism to him at the club, he never forgives him; and, so well is this understood among his friends, that he might live in London a year, and all the magazines might dissect him, and he would probably never hear of it."—N. P. WILLIS ("Pencillings by the Way").

*Dislike for criticism.*

Breakfasted in bed for the purpose of hastening the remainder of my "Cribb" work. It is singular the difference that bed makes, not only in the facility but the *fancy* of what I write . . . ; if I did not find that it relaxed me exceedingly, I should pass half my day in bed for the purpose of composition.—THOMAS MOORE ("Journal," etc.).

*Two methods of work.*

Mr. S. C. Hall, in his "Book of Memories," describes Moore's cottage at Sloperton. He tells us

*Two meth-  
ods of work.*

that there was a garden and lawn in front, and a kitchen garden behind, and that along this kitchen garden there was a raised bank, which the poet called his "terrace-walk." "Here," Mr. Hall continues, "a small deal table stood through all weathers ; for it was his custom to compose as he walked, and, at this table, to pause and write down his thoughts. He was always in motion when he composed. If the weather prevented his walking on the terrace, he would pace up and down his small study ; the length of his walk was indicated by the state of the carpet ; the places where his steps turned were, at both ends, worn into holes."

*Duel with  
Jeffrey.*

(In 1806 there appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* a criticism upon a recently published work of Moore's. This criticism so deeply incensed Moore, that he challenged the author, Jeffrey, to mortal combat. The account of this meeting is so characteristic of both the men, that I insert it, notwithstanding its length. After describing the preliminaries of the duel ; the insulting letter which he wrote to Jeffrey, couched in such terms as to preclude all explanation or retraction ; his own utter ignorance of the use of fire-arms ; the choice of seconds, Horner acting for Jeffrey, Hume for himself, Moore proceeds as follows :—)

The chaise being in readiness, we set off for Chalk Farm. . . . On reaching the ground we found Jeffrey and his party already arrived. . . . And then it was that, for the first time, my excellent friend Jeffrey and I met face to face. He was standing with the bag, which contained the pistols,

in his hand, while Horner was looking anxiously around.

It was agreed that the spot where we found them, which was screened on one side by large trees, would be as good for our purpose as any we could select ; and Horner, after expressing some anxiety respecting some men whom he had seen suspiciously hovering about, but who now appeared to have departed, retired with Hume behind the trees, for the purpose of loading the pistols, leaving Jeffrey and myself together.

All this had occupied but a very few minutes. We, of course, had bowed to each other on meeting ; but the first words I recollect to have passed between us was Jeffrey's saying, on our being left together, "What a beautiful morning it is !" "Yes," I answered with a slight smile, "a morning made for better purposes ;" to which his only response was a sort of assenting sigh. As our assistants were not, any more than ourselves, very expert at warlike matters, they were rather slow in their proceedings ; and as Jeffrey and I walked up and down together, we came once in sight of their operations : upon which I related to him, as rather *à propos* to the purpose, what Billy Egan, the Irish barrister, once said, when, as he was sauntering about in like manner while the pistols were loading, his antagonist, a fiery little fellow, called out to him angrily to keep his ground. "Don't make yourself unaisy, my dear fellow," said Egan ; "sure isn't it bad enough to take the dose, without being at the mixing up ?"

*Duel with  
Jeffrey.*

Jeffrey had scarcely time to smile at this story,

*Duel with  
Jeffrey.*

when our two friends, issuing from behind the trees, placed us at our respective posts (the distance, I suppose, having been previously measured by them), and put the pistols into our hands. They then retired to a little distance; the pistols were on both sides raised; and we waited but the signal to fire, when some police officers, whose approach none of us had noticed, and who were within a second of being too late, rushed out from a hedge behind Jeffrey; and one of them, striking at Jeffrey's pistol with his staff, knocked it to some distance into the field, while another running over to me, took possession also of mine. We were then replaced in our respective carriages, and conveyed, crestfallen, to Bow Street.

On our way thither Hume told me, that from Horner not knowing anything about the loading of pistols he had been obliged to help him in the operation, and in fact to take upon himself chiefly the task of loading both pistols. When we arrived at Bow Street, the first step of both parties was to despatch messengers to procure some friends to bail us. . . . In the meanwhile we were all shown into a sitting-room, the people in attendance having first inquired whether it was our wish to be separated, but neither party having expressed any desire to that effect, we were all put together in the same room. Here conversation upon some literary subject, I forget what, soon ensued, in which I myself took only the brief and occasional share, beyond which, at that time of my life, I seldom ventured in general society. But whatever was the topic, Jeffrey, I recollect, expatiated upon it with all his pe-



culiar fluency and eloquence ; and I can now most vividly recall him to my memory, as he lay upon his back on a form which stood beside the wall, pouring volubly forth his fluent but most oddly pronounced diction, and dressing this subject out in every variety of array that an ever rich and ready wardrobe of phraseology could supply. I have been told of his saying, soon after our rencontre, that he had taken a fancy to me from the first moment of our meeting together in the field ; and I can truly say that my liking for him is of the same date.<sup>1</sup>—THOMAS MOORE ("Journal," etc.).

*Duel with  
Jeffrey.*

Reference to his journal will show that, of all his contemporaries—whenever he spoke of them—he had something kindly to say. There is no evidence of ill-nature in any case—not a shadow of envy or jealousy.—S. C. HALL ("A Book of Memories").

*Kindly  
judgments  
of men.*

I do not think he would willingly calumniate or even disparage ; if he could not speak well of a man, he would abstain from speaking ill of him.—J. C. YOUNG ("Memoir of C. M. Young").

To his mother— . . . a humbly-descended, homely, and almost uneducated woman—Moore gave intense respect and devoted affection, from the time that reason dawned upon him to the hour of her death. To her he wrote his first letter (in 1793), . . . and in the zenith of his fame, when society drew largely on his time, and the highest and best

*Devotion to  
his mother.*

<sup>1</sup> The result was that the duellists were bound over to keep the peace, and soon after met at Rogers's house, settled their difficulty amicably, and became intimate friends.

*Devotion to  
his mother.*

in the land coveted a portion of his leisure, with her he corresponded so regularly that at her death she possessed (so Mrs. Moore told me) four thousand of his letters. Never, according to the statement of Earl Russell, did he pass a week without writing to her *twice*, except while absent in Bermuda, when franks were not to be obtained, and postages were costly.—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

*Leigh  
Hunt's  
opinion.*

Mr. Moore was lively, polite, bustling, full of amenities and acquiescences, into which he contrived to throw a sort of roughening of cordiality, like the crust of old port. It seemed a happiness to him to say “Yes.” There was just enough of the Irishman in him to flavor his speech and manner. He was a little particular, perhaps, in his ortheöpy, but not more so than became a poet: and he appeared to me the last man in the world to cut his country even for the sake of high life.—LEIGH HUNT (“Lord Byron and his Contemporaries”).

*Cheerful-  
ness and  
honesty.*

Moore is still more delightful in society than he is in his writings; the sweetest-blooded, warmest-hearted, happiest, hopefulest creature that ever set fortune at defiance. He was quite ruined about three years ago by the treachery of a deputy in a small office he held, and was forced to reside in France. He came over since I came to England, to settle his debts by the sacrifice of every farthing he had in the world, and had scarcely got to London when he found that the whole scheme of settlement had blown up, and that he must return in ten days to his exile. And yet I saw nobody so sociable, kind and happy; so resigned, or rather so trium-

phant over fortune, by the buoyancy of his spirits and the inward light of his mind.—FRANCIS JEFFREY (From a letter written in 1822).

*Cheerfulness and honesty.*

There have been many who would suffer the extreme of penury rather than borrow—such . . . was Thomas Moore, to whom the purses of wealthy and high-born friends were as sacred as the Crown-jewels.—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

I knew him well, and, rating him as a poet much lower than you do, delighted in him as a companion and wit—the most perfectly graceful, genial, and kindly of all wits. As a family man, he was, I believe, more than usually amiable. My acquaintance with him was in town, but a dear friend of mine was his near neighbor and Mrs. Moore’s intimate friend at Sloperton, and she says that she never knew a more exemplary husband and father.—MARY RUSSELL MITFORD (“Friendships of M. R. Mitford”).<sup>1</sup>

*A woman's opinion: a good husband and father.*

In a recently published volume upon Moore, by A. J. Symington,<sup>2</sup> I find the following estimate of Moore, written by William Howitt, who knew him:—

“It is as useless to wish Moore anything but what he was, as to wish a butterfly a bee, or that a moth should not fly into a candle. It was his nature; and the pleasure of being caressed, flattered, and admired by titled people must be purchased at any

*General view of his character.*

<sup>1</sup> L'Estrange (Rev. A. G.). The Friendships of Mary Russell Mitford, as recorded in Letters from her Literary Correspondents. 12mo. New York, 1882.

<sup>2</sup> Symington (Andrew James). Thomas Moore, his Life and Works.

General  
view of his  
character.

cost. Neither poverty nor sorrow could restrain him from this dear enjoyment. We find him one moment overwhelmed by some death or distress amongst his nearest relatives or in the very bosom of his family. News arrives that a son is ill in a far-off land, or a daughter is dead at home. In the very next entry in his diary he has rushed away with his grief into some fashionable concert, where he sings and breaks down in tears. . . . He goes into the charmed, glittering ring to forget his trouble, and leaves poor, desolate Mrs. Moore solitarily at home to remember it.

“At another time you find him invited to dine with some great people, but he has not a penny in his pocket ; Bessy, however, has scraped together a pound or two out of the housekeeping cash, and lets him have it, and he is off.

“And yet this strange little fairy was a most affectionate husband, son, and brother. We find him and his wife staying at Lord Moira’s for a week beyond the time that they should have left, because they had not money enough to give to the servants. Thus, night after night, season after season, he is the flattered and laughing centre of the most brilliant circles of lords and ladies, while he and his wife, in the daytime, are at their wits’ end to find the means of meeting the demands of their humble *ménage*. He is joking and carolling like a lark, while his thoughts are, at every pause, running on how that confounded bill is to be taken up. All the time, his wife is sitting solitarily at home pondering on the same thing, and cannot call on her friends because it would necessitate the hire of a coach.”

SAMUEL ROGERS.

1763-1855.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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**R**OGERS used to tell, in his old age, how on a certain day long ago, when he was an unknown youth, he went to a house in London and knocked for admittance. Presently he heard a shuffling sound, as of an old man moving about within. He did not wait until the door was opened, but fled precipitately, dismayed by the approach of the man whom he longed to see. We can fancy the opening of that door, we can almost see the unwieldy frame and disordered garb of him who stood for a moment upon the threshold, rolling his great head and peering forth into the vacancy of Bolt Court—for it was Samuel Johnson to whom young Rogers went to pay his respects. Rogers remembered the oratory of Burke, the acting of Garrick. He was thirteen years old at the time of the American revolution; and yet some of us can recall how we laughed, only a few years ago, when his peculiarities of voice and manner were mimicked by Charles Dickens, in his reading of "Justice Stareleigh," the judge of the "Pickwick" trial.

In his youth Rogers wished to become a dissenting minister, but his father prevented him from do-

ing so by taking him into his bank. He remained constant throughout his life to the principles in which he was born and bred, adhering in religion to the dissenters, and in politics to the whigs. His frequent visits to the continent, and the publication of his various works, were the only incidents which disturbed the even course of his life. His long bachelorhood was uneventful, but it derives considerable interest from the curious variety of aspects in which he appeared. He was a successful banker ; an intelligent and generous patron of literature and art ; a laborious scholar and author ; and a leader in literary society, where he was by turns courted for his wit, and dreaded for the cruelty with which he exercised it. His character shows a singular combination of benevolence and malignity.

The nearest approach that has been made to a life of Rogers is a sketch by his nephew, Samuel Sharpe, which was privately printed in London, in 1859, and has since been published in several editions of Rogers's poetical works. Alexander Dyce published a volume of his table-talk. In addition to these works the following volumes may be mentioned : William Jerdan's, "Men I have Known," and the "Autobiography" of the same writer ; P. G. Patmore's "My Friends and Acquaintances ;" S. C. Hall's "Book of Memories ;" James T. Fields's "Old Acquaintance ;" C. R. Leslie's "Autobiography ;" Abraham Hayward's "Essays ;" H. F. Chorley's "Autobiography ;" Harriet Martineau's "Biographical Sketches ;" Henry Crabb Robinson's "Diary ;" and Thomas Moore's "Journal."



## LEADING EVENTS OF ROGERS'S LIFE.

1763. Born, July 30th, at Stoke Newington, a suburb of London.
- 1781.—(Aged 18.) Contributes to the *Gentleman's Magazine*.
- 1786.—(Aged 23.) Publishes "An Ode to Superstition."
- 1792.—(Aged 29.) Publishes "The Pleasures of Memory."
- 1812.—(Aged 49.) Publishes "Columbus."
- 1814.—(Aged 51.) Publishes "Jacqueline."
- 1819.—(Aged 56.) Publishes "Human Life."
- 1822.—(Aged 59.) Publishes the first part of "Italy."
- 1828.—(Aged 65.) Publishes the second part of "Italy."
- 1855.—(Aged 92 years, 4 months.) Dies, December 18th.

NOTE.—Rogers was privately educated, and entered his father's banking-house. Precise dates of events in his life, from his first to his eighteenth year, are not obtainable.



## SAMUEL ROGERS.

HIS personal appearance was extraordinary, or rather, his countenance was unique. His skull and facial expression bore so striking a likeness to the skeleton pictures which we sometimes see of Death, that the facetious Sydney Smith (at one of the dressed evening parties . . . ) entitled him the "Death-dandy!" And it was told (probably with truth) that the same satirical wag inscribed upon the capital portrait in his breakfast-room, "Painted in his life-time."—W. JERDAN ("Men I have Known").<sup>1</sup>

*Personal  
appearance.*

There is something preternatural in the cold, clear, marbly paleness that pervades, and, as it were, penetrates his features to a depth that seems to preclude all change, even that of death itself. Yet there is nothing in the least degree painful or repulsive in the sight, nothing that is suggestive of death.—P. G. PATMORE ("My Friends and Acquaintance").<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jerdan (William). *Men I have Known*. 8vo. London, 1866.

<sup>2</sup> Patmore (Peter George). *My Friends and Acquaintance*. 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1854.

*Personal  
appearance.*

A man evidently aged, yet remarkably active, though with a slight stoop and grizzled hair ; not, to my thinking, with a pleasant countenance ; certainly not with the frank and free expression of a poet, who loved and lived with Nature ; . . . He did not often smile, and seldom laughed.—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

His countenance was the theme of continued jokes. It was “ugly,” if not repulsive. The expression was in no way, nor under any circumstances, good ; he had a drooping eye and a thick under lip ; his forehead was broad, his head large—out of proportion, indeed, to his form. . . . His features were “cadaverous.” Lord Dudley once asked him why, now that he could afford it, he did not set up his hearse ; and it is said that Sydney Smith once gave him mortal offence by recommending him, “when he sat for his portrait, to be drawn saying his prayers, with his face hidden by his hands.”—S. C. HALL (“Book of Memories”).

His head was very fine, and I never could quite understand the satirical sayings about his personal appearance which have crept into the literary gossip of his time. He was by no means the vivacious spectre some of his contemporaries have represented him, and I never thought of connecting him with that terrible line in the “Mirror of Magistrates ;”—

“His withered fist still striking at Death’s door.”

His dome of brain was one of the amplest and most

perfectly shaped I ever saw, and his countenance was very far from unpleasant. His faculties to enjoy had not perished with age. He certainly looked like a well-seasoned author, but not dropping to pieces yet.—JAMES T. FIELDS (“Old Acquaintance”).<sup>1</sup>

*Personal  
appearance.*

My first look at the poet, then in his seventy-eighth year, was an agreeable surprise, and a protest in my mind against the malignant injustice which had been done him. As a young man he might have been uncomely if not as ugly as his revilers had painted him, but as an old man there was an intellectual charm in his countenance and a fascination in his manner which more than atoned for any deficiency of personal beauty.—CHARLES MACKAY (“Forty Years’ Recollections”).<sup>2</sup>

Several times, at Petworth, we met Mr. Rogers. I recollect that, one evening, all the young ladies in the house, formed a circle round him, listening with extreme interest to a series of ghost stories which he told with great effect. Indeed, while he stayed at Petworth, the beaux there had little chance of engaging the belles, when he was in the room. His manner of telling a story was perfect. I remember only one other person, the late Lady Holland, who, like him, used the fewest words with the greatest possible effect ; sometimes more than sup-

*Convers-  
ation.*

<sup>1</sup> Fields (James T.). Old Acquaintance : Barry Cornwall and some of his Friends. 32mo. Boston : J. R. Osgood & Co. 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Mackay (Charles). Forty Years’ Recollections, from 1830 to 1870. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1877.

*Conversa-  
tion.*

plying the omission of a word by a look, or a gesture. Rogers *told* his stories as in prose he *wrote* them. The story of "Marcolini" in his "Italy," for instance, could not have better words, nor fewer, without loss of interest.—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").<sup>1</sup>

My uncle's conversation could hardly be called brilliant. He seldom aimed at wit, though he enjoyed it in others. He often told anecdotes of his early recollections and of the distinguished persons with whom he had been acquainted. These he told with great neatness and fitness in the choice of words, as may be understood by an examination of the prose notes to his poems. But the valuable part of his conversation was his good sense joined with knowledge of literature and art, and yet more particularly his constant aim at improvement, and the care that he took to lead his friends to what was worth talking about.—SAMUEL SHARPE ("Some Particulars of the Life of S. Rogers").<sup>2</sup>

*Dickens's  
imitation of  
his manner  
of telling a  
story.*

In Percy Fitzgerald's "Recreations of a Literary Man," there is a story of Dickens's imitation of Rogers, which, although in very bad taste, is too suggestive to be omitted:—"I recall his filling more than an hour with some sketches of 'Old Rogers,' the poet, and of his mode of telling a story. Those

<sup>1</sup> Leslie (Charles Robert). Autobiographical Recollections. Ed. by Tom Taylor. 2 vols. 12mo. London, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> This sketch was privately printed in London, in 1859. It has since been published in several editions of R.'s poems.

who attended the Readings will recall Justice Stareleigh: the strangely obtuse and owl-like expression, and the slow, husky croak with which the words were projected. This was borrowed from the 'Poet of Memory,' and many were the stories he told in his manner. The old man would relate his cut-and-dried 'tales,' always in the same fashion, and 'go on,' like a wheezy musical box, on the smallest invitation. Sometimes Dickens would go and dine with him, and he described the scene as piteously grotesque, a faithful man-servant cheerily suggesting the old stories which they knew by heart. Thus: 'Tell Mr. Dickens, sir, the story of the Hon. Charles Townshend and the beautiful Miss Curzon.' The old poet would start in a slow, almost Gregorian tone, and in curious old-fashioned phrase: 'The Hon-or-able Charles Townshend' (this name will serve as well as another) 'became enamored of Miss Curzon. She was beeyewtiful. He beribed her maid to conceal him in her cheeamber, and when she arrived to dress for a ball, emerged from his hiding-place. She looked at him fixedly, then said: "Why don't you begin?" *She took him for the 'air-dresser!*'"<sup>1</sup>

*Dickens's  
imitation of  
his manner  
of telling a  
story.*

He was a great walker, and it was his daily custom after breakfast (which was often a long meal, as he was fond of company at his breakfast-table) to go out and spend the greater part of the day in the open air, quite regardless of the weather, of which he never complained.—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").

*A great  
walker.*

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 182, 183, 187.

*Not afraid  
of foul  
weather.*

On occasions when he attended meetings of the Royal Society, . . . at the close, let the night be ever so severe, if rain or snow were falling, he was invariably seen buttoning up his great-coat in preparation for a walk home. On one occasion I ventured to say to him, . . . "Mr. Rogers, it is a very wet night ; I have a fly at the door : may I have the honor to leave you at your house ?" but the invitation was declined ; the old man faced the weather, from which younger and stronger men would have wisely shrunk.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

*Observation  
of nature.*

In Mr. Clayden's biography of Rogers's nephew, Samuel Sharpe,<sup>1</sup> the following extract from Sharpe's diary is printed : "He said he never, when he could help it, missed seeing the sunset, and regretted that by being in bed we lost the sunrise. He often felt inclined to stop the people in the streets to show them a glorious sky. Looking at such wonders of nature he thought should be cultivated as a habit."

*Good taste.*

Whatever place may be assigned to Samuel Rogers among poets, he deserves to hold the highest place among men of taste, not merely of taste for this or that, but of general good taste in all things. He was the only man I have ever known (not an artist) who felt the beauties of art like an artist. He was too quiet to exercise the influence he should have maintained among the patrons of art ;

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<sup>1</sup> Clayden (P. W.). Samuel Sharpe, Egyptologist and Translator of the Bible. 8vo. London, 1883.



but, as far as his own patronage extended, it was most useful. He employed, and always spoke his mind in favor of, Flaxman, Stothard, and Turner, when they were little appreciated by their countrymen. The proof of his superior judgment to that of any contemporary collector of art or *vertu* is to be found in the fact that there was nothing in his house that was not valuable. In most other collections with which I am acquainted, however fine the works of art, or however rare the objects of curiosity, I have always found something that betrayed a want of taste—an indifferent picture, a copy passing for an original, or something vulgar in the way of ornament.—C. R. LESLIE (“Autobiographical Recollections”).

*Good taste.*

In his writings, as in his daily life, Mr. Rogers was fastidious. In correcting the press, only Campbell could equal him for anxiety to polish. On one occasion I chanced to see a sheet of one of his poems (“Italy,” I think) as it was passing through the printer’s hands, and pointed out some very slight errors. The reader told him of this hypercriticism (for it was nothing more), and he cancelled the whole of the impression, and introduced the required alteration at the expense of above one hundred pounds. In other respects he would not be guilty of anything like extravagance. On the contrary, there was a curious spice of the miser-economy in his nature.—W. JERDAN (“Men I have Known”).

*Fastidiousness.*

One Friday afternoon, when I went as usual to my printer’s, . . . to correct the last proofs,

*Costly accuracy.*

. . . I happened to glance over some loose sheets lying on the desk of Rogers's "Italy" (I think). I pointed out two or three of the slightest inaccuracies or doubtful points to the reader, . . . which he communicated to the poet, and the result was the cancelling of several sheets, at an expense of fifty or sixty pounds. The majority of writers would not have given sixpence to mend them all. Not so the fastidious Rogers.—W. JERDAN ("Autobiography").

*Composition a slow and laborious process.*

Writing with great difficulty himself, he disparaged and undervalued all who wrote with facility; and boasted to me that he had employed three weeks in writing a short note to Lord Melbourne, to suggest the bestowal of a pension. . . . There was not a word in it, he said, which he had not studied and weighed, and examined, so as to assure himself that it could not be omitted or exchanged for a better.—CHARLES MACKAY ("Forty Years' Recollections").

*Musical taste: an organ-grinder in the hall.*

Rogers's musical taste was a natural gift, the result of organization, and partook very slightly of the acquired or conventional quality. He delighted in sweet sounds, in soft flowing airs, . . . in simple melodies, rather than in complicated harmonies. . . . Amongst Italian composers, Bellini was his favorite. Although he was a constant attendant at the concerts of ancient and sacred music, he had slight relish for the acknowledged masterpieces of Handel, Beethoven, or Mozart. When he dined at home and alone, it was his custom to have an Italian organ-grinder playing in the

hall.<sup>1</sup> . . . He kept nightingales in cages on his staircase and in his bedroom, closely covered up from the light, to sing to him.—ANON. (*Edinburgh Review*, July, 1856).

*Humor.*

Those who know Rogers only from his writings, can have no conception of his humor. I have seen him, in his old age, imitate the style of dancing of a very great lady with an exactness that made it much more ludicrous than any caricature ; and I remember, when I met him at Cassiobury, that he made some droll attack, I quite forget what it was about, on one of the company, and went on heightening the ridicule at every sentence, till his face "was like a wet cloak ill laid up," as were the faces of all present, and especially the face of the gentleman he was attacking.

At an evening party, at which I met him, the the oddest looking little old lady, for she was as broad as she was long, and most absurdly dressed, as she was leaving the room saw him near the door, and accosted him : "How do you do, Mr. Rogers ? It is very long since I have seen you, and I don't think, now, you know who I am." "Could I ever forget you !" He said it with such an emphasis that she squeezed his hand with delight.—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").

Rogers was unceasingly at war with the late Lady Davy. One day at dinner she called across the

<sup>1</sup> It is amusing, in this connection, to remember that Dickens wrote to Forster that he had bought a new accordeon, upon which he played for the benefit of the passengers, while on his first voyage to this country.

*Humor.*

table; "Now, Mr. Rogers, I am sure you are talking about me" (not attacking, as the current version runs). "Lady Davy," was the retort, "I pass my life in defending you."—A. HAYWARD ("Es-says").<sup>1</sup>

*Insincerity.*

I soon discovered that it was the principle of his sarcastic wit not only to sacrifice all truth to it, but even all his friends, and that he did not care to know any who would not allow themselves to be abused for the purpose of lighting up his breakfast with sparkling wit, though not quite, indeed, at the expense of the persons then present. I well remember, on one occasion . . . Mr. Rogers was entertaining us with a volume of sarcasms upon a disagreeable lawyer, who made pretensions to knowledge and standing not to be borne; on this occasion the old poet went on, not only to the end of the breakfast, but to the announcement of the very man himself on an accidental visit, and then, with a bland smile and a cordial shake of the hand, he said to him, "My dear fellow, we have all been talking about you up to this very minute,"—and looking at his company still at table, and with a significant wink, he, with extraordinary adroitness and experienced tact, repeated many of the good things, reversing the meaning of them, and giving us the enjoyment of the *double entendre*. The visitor was charmed, nor even dreamed of the ugliness of his position. . . . I should be unjust to the venerable poet

<sup>1</sup> Hayward (Abraham). Biographical and Critical Essays. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1858.

not to add, that notwithstanding what is here related of him, he oftentimes showed himself the generous and noble-hearted man.—JOSEPH SEVERN (*Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1863).

He was, plainly speaking, at once a flatterer and a cynic. It was impossible for those who knew him best to say, at any moment, whether he was in earnest or covert jest. Whether he was ever in earnest, there is no sort of evidence but his acts; and the consequence was that his flattery went for nothing, except with novices, while his causticity bit as deep as he intended. He would begin with a series of outrageous compliments, in a measured style which forbade interruption; and, if he was allowed to finish, would go away and boast how much he had made a victim swallow. He would accept a constant seat at a great man's table, flatter his host to the top of his bent, and then, as is upon record, go away and say that the company there was got up by conscription—that there were two parties before whom everybody must appear, his host and the police. When it was safe, he would try his sarcasms on the victims themselves. A multitude of his sayings are rankling in people's memories which could not possibly have had any other origin than the love of giving pain. Some are so atrocious as to suggest the idea that he had a sort of psychological curiosity to see how people could bear such inflictions.—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Biographical Sketches").<sup>1</sup>

*A flatterer  
and a cynic.*

<sup>1</sup> Martineau (Harriet). Biographical Sketches. 12mo. London, 1869.

*Wilful  
rudeness.*

Few old men have ever shown a more mortifying behavior to a young one than Mr. Rogers, from the first to the last, displayed towards me. There was no doubting the dislike which he had conceived for me, and which he took every possible pains to make me feel. . . . Whatever the cause might be, he did his best to make me feel small and uncomfortable; and it was often done by repeating the same discouragement. The scene would be a dinner of eight; at which he would say, loud enough to be heard, "Who is that young man with red hair?" (meaning me). The answer would be, "Mr. Chorley," *et cetera, et cetera*. "Never heard of him before," was the rejoinder: after which Rogers would turn to his dinner, like one, who, having disposed of a nuisance, might unfold his napkin, and eat his soup in peace.—H. F. CHORLEY ("Autobiography").<sup>1</sup>

*Gratuitous  
brutality.*

I always considered myself the person to whom Rogers made his most gratuitously ill-natured speech. . . . It was at the *Antient Concerts*, on a night when the room was crowded, . . . and when every seat was occupied. Mine was at the end of a bench, by the side of the Dowager Lady Essex (Miss Stephens that had been). She was one of Rogers's prime favorites. . . . He loved to sit next her, and pay her those elegant and courteous compliments, the art of paying which is lost. When I saw the old gentleman creeping down the side avenue betwixt the benches, at a loss for a seat, I

<sup>1</sup> Chorley (Henry F.). *Autobiography, Memoir, and Letters*. Compiled by H. G. Hewlett. 2 vols. 12mo. London, 1873.

said, "*Now I shall give up my place to Mr. Rogers; good-night.*" While I was stooping for my hat, "Come," said she, in her cordial way, "come, Mr. Rogers, here is a seat for you by me." "Thank you," said the civil old gentleman, fixing his dead eyes on me, as I was doing my best to get out of the way; "*thank you; but I don't like your company.*"—H. F. CHORLEY ("Autobiography").

*Gratuitous  
brutality.*

May 4, 1851. Forster called; went with him to Rogers. Found the old man very cheerful, thinner than when I last saw him, but in very good spirits. He told all his stories "over again." . . . Took leave of dear old Rogers once more. I think indeed for the last time. I cannot make out his character. He is surely good-natured, with philanthropic and religious feelings, but his fondness for saying a sharp thing shakes one's certainty in him: his apparent desire too to produce effect, I think, sometimes awakens doubts of his sincerity in some minds.—W. C. MACREADY ("Reminiscences").<sup>1</sup>

*In doubt  
concerning  
his character.*

He was one of those few instances in which talent is found united with wealth and energetic labor. In his literary work he was most persevering; so much so that he spent no less than seventeen years in writing and revising "The Pleasures of Memory." But Rogers was not only a wealthy banker and rural poet; he had also a keen sense of humor, and there

*Various  
character-  
istics.*

<sup>1</sup> Macready (William Charles). *Reminiscences and Selections from his Diaries and Letters.* Ed. by Sir F. Pollock. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1875.

*Various  
character-  
istics.*

was something in the deadness of his countenance and the dryness of his manner which seemed to give additional point to his sarcasms. . . . Lord Lansdowne once spoke to him in congratulatory terms about the marriage of a common friend. "I do not think it so desirable," observed Rogers. "No!" replied Lord Lansdowne, "why not? His friends approve of it!" "Happy man!" returned Rogers, "to satisfy all the world. His friends are pleased, *and his enemies are delighted!*"—A. G. L'ESTRANGE ("Life of W. Harness").

*Contradiction of  
character  
increased  
by age.*

As age advanced upon him, the admixture of the generous and malignant in him became more singular. A footman robbed him of a large quantity of plate; and of a kind which was inestimable to him. He was incensed, and desired never to hear of the fellow more,—the man having absconded. Not many months afterward Rogers was paying the passage to New York of the man's wife and family—somebody having told him that that family junction might afford a chance of the man's reformation. Such were his deeds at the very time that his tongue was dropping verjuice, and his wit was sneering behind backs at a whole circle of old friends and hospitable entertainers.—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Biographical Sketches").

*A cold  
critic.*

Anything approaching hilarity, aught akin to enthusiasm, to a genuine flow of heart and soul, was foreign to his nature—or, at all events, seemed to be so. Yet, of a surety, he was a keen observer; he looked "quite through the deeds of men;" and his



natural talent had been matured and polished by long and familiar intercourse with all the finer spirits of his age.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

If he had done no more than check pushing presumption, or expose fawning insignificance, his habitual severity of comment would have caused no reflection on his memory; but it became so formidable at one time, that his guests might be seen manœuvring which should leave the room last, so as not to undergo the apprehended ordeal.—A. HAYWARD ("Essays").

Rogers, whose "Table-talk" was charming, . . . never could speak in public.—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Memoir of Wilson").<sup>1</sup>

Wealthy, unmarried, highly cultivated in all matters of literature and art, his conversation seasoned with anecdote and personal sarcasms uttered in a curious sepulchral voice, he gained and kept a higher place than his poetry alone could have procured for him. He was the arbiter in many of the literary controversies and quarrels of his day. His dinner-table—the *blanda conciliatrix* in so many social discords—ministered well to this object. In society his most severe sarcasms were often hidden under honeyed phrases; leaving them obvious to others, while undetected by those whose foibles he assailed. There was foundation for the remark

*A formidable satirist.*

*Inability to speak in public.*

*Social traits.*

<sup>1</sup>Wilson (John). Noctes Ambrosianæ. With Memoirs and Notes by R. Shelton Mackenzie. 5 vols. 12mo. New York, 1854.

*Social  
traits.*

that a note from Rogers generally conveyed some indirect satire on the person to whom it was addressed—the more flattery on the surface, the more gall underneath. He could be and was ever generous to poverty and real distress, but intolerant to all that presented itself in social rivalry to himself. The usurpation by others of talk at a dinner-table, or an interruption to one of his own anecdotes, was sure to provoke some access of bitterness bitterly expressed. These feelings increased with increasing age. They were somewhat curiously modified in the distrust with which he latterly regarded his own memory—rarely venturing upon an anecdote without a *caveat* as to his having told it before. He long survived most of his contemporaries of middle life, and all those who, in retaliation for his sarcasms, were wont to spend their wit on his death-like physiognomy.—SIR HENRY HOLLAND (“Recollections”).

*His favor-  
ite author.*

When I used to go and sit with Mr. Rogers, I never asked him what I should read to him without his putting into my hands his own poems, which always lay by him on his table.—FRANCES ANN KEMBLE (“Records of Later Life”).<sup>1</sup>

*Fondness  
for chil-  
dren.*

Mr. Rogers was very fond of children. On his visits to us, when ours were little ones, his first ceremony was to rub noses with them. “Now,” he would say, “we are friends for life. If you will

<sup>1</sup> Kemble (Frances Ann). Records of Later Life. 12mo. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1882.

come and live with me, you shall have as much cherry-pie as you can eat, and a white pony to ride."—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").

*Fondness  
for chil-  
dren.*

Mr. J. T. Fields, in his "Old Acquaintance," tells of an interview with Rogers, in the course of which a portrait of him was criticised :—"Some one said, 'The portrait is too hard.' 'I won't be painted as a hard man,' rejoined Rogers. 'I am not a hard man, am I, Procter?' asked the old poet. Procter deprecated with energy such an idea as that. Looking at the portrait again, Rogers said with great feeling, 'Children would run away from that face, and they never ran away from me!'"

Those who are disposed to think the worst of Mr. Rogers, say that, by the severity of his remarks, he delighted in giving pain. I know that, by the kindness of his remarks, and still more by the kindness of his acts, he delighted to give pleasure.—C. R. LESLIE ("Autobiographical Recollections").

*Practical  
benevolence.*

It has been rumored that he was a sayer of bitter things. I know that he was a *giver* of good things—a kind and amiable patron, where a patron was wanted; never ostentatious or oppressive, and always a friend in need. He was ready with his counsel; ready with his money. I never put his generosity to the test, but I know enough to testify that it existed, and was often exercised in a delicate manner, and on the slightest hint.—B. W. PROCTER ("Autobiographical Fragment").

*Kindness to  
Campbell.*

Left Rogers's with Campbell, who told me, as we walked along, the friendly service which Rogers had just done him by consenting to advance five hundred pounds, which Campbell wants at this moment to purchase a share in the new (*Metropolitan*) magazine. . . . Campbell had offered as security an estate worth between four and five thousand pounds which he has in Scotland, but Rogers had very generously said that he did not want security. . . . These are noble things of Rogers, and he does more of such things than the world has any notion of.—THOMAS MOORE ("Journal," etc.).

*The friend  
of poor  
poets.*

He was always substantially helping poor poets. Besides the innumerable instances, known only to his intimates, of the attention he bestowed, as well as the money, in the case of poetical basket-makers, poetical footmen, and other such hopeless sons of the Muse, his deeds of munificence toward men of genius were too great to be concealed. . . . It was Rogers who secured to Crabbe the three thousand pounds from Murray, which were in jeopardy before. He advanced five hundred pounds to Campbell to purchase a share of the *Metropolitan Magazine*, and refused security. And he gave thought, took trouble, used influence, and adventured advice.—HARRIET MARTINEAU ("Biographical Sketches").

Mr. Rogers was only a cynic in theory, not in practice, and was always ready to lend a helping hand, either by good counsel or by more sterling and palpable aid. . . . He said unkind things,

but he did kind ones in the most gracious manner. If he was sometimes severe upon those who were "up," he was always tender to those who were "down." He never closed his purse-strings against a friend, or refused to help the young and deserving.—CHARLES MACKAY ("Forty Years' Recollections").

*The friend  
of poor  
poets.*

Before condemning Rogers on the evidence of those to whom the black side of his character was most frequently presented, we must hear those whose attention was constantly attracted to the white side. One female reminiscent, nurtured and domesticated with genius from her childhood, writes thus:—

*Eulogies.*

"I knew the kind old man for five and twenty years. I say kind advisedly, because no one did so many kind things to those who, being unable to dig, to beg are ashamed. The sharp sayings were remembered and repeated because they were so clever . . . He was essentially a gentleman, by education, by association,—his manners were perfect. . . . He not only gave freely and generously, but looked out for occasions of being kind."—A. HAYWARD ("Essays").

*Nov. 29, 1835.* I breakfasted with Rogers *tête à tête*, staying with him from ten till one o'clock. A very agreeable morning, and I left him with feelings of enhanced respect. There was very little of that severity of remark for which he is reproached. Candor and good sense marked all he said. . . . It was painful (he said) that he recollected so dis-

*Eulogies.*

tinctly his faults, "but," said he, "every man has his kind moments, and occasionally does kind actions ; of course, I, as well as others—and it is distressing I cannot recollect them." "A Pharisee would," I replied, "and surely it is better *not*."—HENRY CRABB ROBINSON ("Diary").

I think you very fortunate in having Rogers in Rome. Show me a more kind and friendly man ; secondly, one from good manners, knowledge, fun, taste, and observation, more agreeable ; thirdly, a man of more strict political integrity, and of better character in private life. If I were to choose any Englishman in foreign parts whom I should wish to blunder upon, it should be Rogers.—SYDNEY SMITH (From a Letter, 1815).

JOHN KEATS.

1795-1821.





## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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FEW things are more interesting or more profoundly sad than the story of Keats's life. Dying in his twenty-sixth year, he was unable to round his character into symmetry, or fitly to develop those qualities, which, even in their immaturity, win our admiration and esteem; for Keats had many sterling qualities. Courage, loyalty, high purpose, strength and gentleness—all are manifest; yet in all there is a certain crudeness, a lack of due proportion and of that poise which is gained through long experience of life, "in years which bring the philosophic mind." There was not time for the ripening of his nature. Not only as to literary work, which cannot be here considered, but likewise as to character, this brief life suggests the opening processes of an experiment. It was tentative,—reaching forth through hardship, doubt, and sorrow, toward great possibilities, possibilities which lay within that earnest seeker's grasp—could he but have lived!

Unhappily, the accounts of Keats are meagre and unsatisfactory. It has been found exceptionally difficult to gather materials illustrative of his char-

acter. Lord Houghton wrote concerning him from hearsay, not from personal knowledge, and his book does not readily lend itself to quotation ; and only a few of Keats's contemporaries have left records of him. The result in the present instance is highly unsatisfactory, and this note might, perhaps, with more propriety have taken the form of a simple apology. The Jews contrived to make bricks, after a fashion, with stubble instead of straw ; but it is presumable that those bricks were unsatisfactory to any honest workman.

The principal source of information is the "Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats," by Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton). The letters of Keats to Miss Fanny Brawne, should also be read—unseemly as it was to publish them. The letters of Keats are by far the best illustrations of his character. The most complete collection of these letters which has yet appeared, is that edited by H. B. Forman.<sup>1</sup> A large amount of very valuable biographical information will be found in these volumes ; the reminiscences of Keats, by various friends, have been brought together ; and the editor gives a careful description and analysis of the various portraits of him. There is a memoir by James Russell Lowell, prefixed to an edition of Keats's poems, published in Boston, in 1854 ; this has been republished, with slight alterations, in the second series of Mr. Lowell's "Among my Books." An especially valuable essay, by Matthew Arnold, will

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<sup>1</sup> Forman (Harry Buxton, *editor*). Poetical Works and other Writings of John Keats. 4 vols. 8vo. London, 1883.

be found in Ward's "English Poets," vol. iv., p. 425. The following works also claim attention :—Leigh Hunt's "Autobiography ;" B. R. Haydon's "Correspondence and Table-talk," edited by F. W. Haydon ; Procter's "Reminiscences," in the volume entitled "Bryan Waller Procter : Autobiographical Fragment, etc.," edited by Coventry Patmore ; Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke's "Recollections of Writers ;" the anonymous articles, entitled "A Greybeard's Gossip," in the *New Monthly Magazine*, 1847 ; and an article by Joseph Severn, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1863.

#### LEADING EVENTS OF KEATS'S LIFE.

1795. Born, October 29th, in London.  
 1804.—(Aged 9.) His father dies. A scholar at Mr. Clarke's school at Enfield.  
 1810.—(Aged 15.) Apprenticed to a surgeon.  
 1817.—(Aged 22.) Publishes his first volume of poems.  
 1818.—(Aged 23.) Publishes "Endymion."  
 1820.—(Aged 25.) Publishes a volume containing "Lamia," "Isabella," "The Eve of Saint Agnes," and other poems. Leaves England with Joseph Severn.  
 1821.—(Aged 25 years, 3 months.) Dies in Rome, February 23d.



## JOHN KEATS.

HE gave vent to his impulses with no regard for consequences; he violently attacked an usher who had boxed his brother's ears, and on the occasion of his mother's death, which occurred suddenly, in 1810, . . . he hid himself in a nook under the master's desk for several days, in a long agony of grief, and would take no consolation from master or from friend. The sense of humor, which almost universally accompanies a deep sensibility, . . . abounded in him; from the first, he took infinite delight in any grotesque originality, or novel prank of his companions, and, after the exhibition of physical courage, appeared to prize these above all other qualifications. . . . His skill in all manly exercises, and the perfect generosity of his disposition made him extremely popular: "He combined," writes one of his school-fellows, "a terrier-like resoluteness of character, with the most noble placability," and another mentions that his extraordinary energy, animation, and ability, impressed them all with a conviction of his future greatness, "but rather in a military or some such active sphere of life, than in the peaceful arena of literature."—R. M. MILNES ("Life of Keats").<sup>1</sup>

*Childhood.*

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<sup>1</sup> Milnes (Richard Monckton, *Lord Houghton*). *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats*. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1848.

*At school.*

Not the less beloved was he for having a highly pugnacious spirit, which, when roused, was one of the most picturesque exhibitions—off the stage—I ever saw. One of the transports of that marvellous actor, Edmund Kean—whom, by the way, he idolized—was its nearest resemblance ; and the two were not very dissimilar in face and figure. . . . His passion at times was almost ungovernable ; and his brother George, being considerably the taller and stronger, used frequently to hold him down by main force, laughing when John was in “one of his moods,” and was endeavoring to beat him. It was all, however, a wisp of straw conflagration ; for he had an intensely tender affection for his brothers, and proved it upon the most trying occasions. He was not merely the “favorite of all,” like a pet prize-fighter, for his terrier courage ; but his high-mindedness, his utter unconsciousness of a mean motive, his placability, his generosity, wrought so general a feeling in his behalf, that I never heard a word of disapproval from any one, superior or equal, who had known him.<sup>1</sup>—CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE (“Recollections of Keats,” *Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1874).

*A hard student at school.*

My father was in the habit, at each half-year's vacation of bestowing prizes upon those pupils who had performed the greatest quantity of voluntary work ; and such was Keats's indefatigable energy for the last two or three successive half-years of his re-

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<sup>1</sup> Keats was a pupil in the school of C. C. Clarke's father ; and it is to his boyhood that the preceding passage refers.

maining at school, that, upon each occasion, he took the first prize by a considerable distance. He was at work before the first school-hour began, and that was at seven o'clock ; almost all the intervening times of recreation were so devoted ; and during the afternoon holidays, when all were at play, he would be in the school—almost the only one—at his Latin or French translation ; and so unconscious and regardless was he of the consequences of so close and persevering an application, that he never would have taken the necessary exercise had he not been sometimes driven out for the purpose by one of the masters.—C. C. CLARKE ("Recollections of Writers").

*A hard student at school.*

Keats, when he died, had just completed his four-and-twentieth year. He was under the middle height ; and his lower limbs were small in comparison with the upper, but neat and well-turned. His shoulders were very broad for his size ; he had a face in which energy and sensibility were remarkably mixed up ; an eager power, checked and made patient by ill health. Every feature was at once strongly cut, and delicately alive. If there was any faulty expression it was in the mouth, which was not without something of a character of pugnacity. The face was rather long than otherwise ; the upper lip projected a little over the under ; the chin was bold, the cheeks sunken ; the eyes mellow and glowing ; large, dark, and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears, and his mouth trembled. In this there was ill health as well as imagination,

*Personal appearance.*

*Personal  
appearance.*

for he did not like these betrayals of emotion ; and he had great personal as well as moral courage. He once chastised a butcher, who had been insolent, by a regular stand-up fight. His hair, of a brown color, was fine, and hung in natural ringlets. The head was a puzzle for the phrenologists, being remarkably small in the skull ; a singularity which he had in common with Byron and Shelley, whose hats I could not get on. Keats was sensible of the disproportion above noticed, between his upper and lower extremities ; and he would look at his hand, which was faded and swollen in the veins, and say it was the hand of a man of fifty. He was a seven months' child.—LEIGH HUNT ("Autobiography").

His stature could have been very little more than five feet ; but he was, withal, compactly made and well-proportioned ; and before the hereditary disorder which carried him off began to show itself, he was active, athletic, and enduringly strong—as the fight with the butcher gave full attestation.—C. C. CLARKE ("Recollections of Keats," *Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1874).

Keats has been described by Coleridge in his "Table Talk" as "a loose, slack, not well-dressed youth ;" and to an observant eye his looks and his attenuated frame already (1816) foreshadowed the consumption that had marked him for its prey. His manner was shy and embarrassed, as of one unused to society, and he spoke little.—ANON. ("A Graybeard's Gossip," *New Monthly Magazine*, 1847).



Keats was under the middle size, and somewhat large above, in proportion to his lower limbs, which, however, were neatly formed ; and he had anything in his dress and general demeanor but that appearance of levity which has been strangely attributed to him. . . . In fact, he had so much of the reverse, though in no unbecoming degree, that he might be supposed to maintain a certain jealous care of the appearance and bearing of a gentleman, in the consciousness of his genius, and perhaps not without some sense of his origin.<sup>1</sup>—LEIGH HUNT (from a letter quoted in S. C. Hall's "Book of Memories").

*Personal  
appearance.*

A lady, whose feminine acuteness of perception is only equalled by the vigor of her understanding, tells me she distinctly remembers Keats as he appeared at this time (1818) at Hazlitt's lectures. "His eyes were large and blue, his hair auburn ;<sup>2</sup> he wore it divided down the centre, and it fell in

<sup>1</sup> His father was a groom in a livery stable.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Cowden Clarke says, in "Recollections of Writers," "Reader, alter in your copy of the Life of Keats . . . 'eyes' *light hazel*, 'hair' *lightish brown and wavy*." And Joseph Severn wrote to James T. Fields, in 1879, "Lord Houghton's life I admire very much, except that he has most obstinately given the poet *blue eyes*, whereas over and over again, I told him that the poet's eyes were *hazel brown*." Further testimony is to be found in Mr. John Gilmer Speed's edition of the letters and poems of John Keats (New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1883). Mr. Speed prints a marginal note, written by Mrs. George Keats, the poet's sister-in-law, in her copy of Lord Houghton's work : this note, referring to the description above, is as follows : "*A mistake. His eyes were dark brown, almost black, large, soft, and expressive, and his hair was a golden red.*"

*Personal  
appearance.*

rich masses on each side of his face ; his mouth was full, and less intellectual than his other features. His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness—it had an expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight. The shape of his face had not the squareness of a man's, but more like some women's faces I have seen—it was so wide over the forehead and so small at the chin. He seemed in perfect health, and with life offering all things that were precious to him.”—R. M. MILNES (“Life of Keats”).

*Sense of  
humor.*

Keats had a strong sense of humor, though he was not, in the strict sense of the term, a humorist, still less a farcist. His comic fancy lurked in the outermost and most unlooked-for images of association ; which, indeed, may be said to form the components of humor ; nevertheless, they did not extend beyond the *quaint* in fulfilment and success. But his perception of humor, with the power of transmitting it by imitation, was both vivid and irresistibly amusing.—C. C. CLARKE (“Recollections of Keats,” *Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1874).

*Grudge  
against  
Newton.*

Don't you remember Keats proposing “Confusion to the memory of Newton,” and upon your insisting on an explanation before you drank it, his saying : “Because he destroyed the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to a prism” ?—B. R. HAYDON (from a letter to Wordsworth).

In conversation he was nothing, or if anything, weak and inconsistent ; he had an exquisite sense

of humor, but it was in the fields that Keats was in his glory. His ruin was owing to his want of decision of character and power of will, without which genius is a curse. He could not bring his mind to bear on one object, and was at the mercy of every petty theory Leigh Hunt's ingenuity would suggest. . . . Fiery, impetuous, ungovernable, and undecided, he expected the world to bow at once to his talents as his friends had done, and he had not patience to bear the natural irritation of envy at the undoubted proof he gave of strength. Goaded by ridicule he distrusted himself, and flew to dissipation. For six weeks he was hardly ever sober; . . . he told me that he once covered his tongue and throat, as far as he could reach, with cayenne pepper, in order to enjoy the "delicious coolness of claret in all its glory." This was his own expression.<sup>1</sup> —B. R. HAYDON (from a letter to Miss Mitford, 1821).

*Various  
traits.*

There was no effort about him to say fine things, but he did say them most effectively, and they gained considerably by his happy transition of manner. He joked well or ill, as it happened, and with a laugh which still echoes sweetly in many ears; but at the mention of oppression or wrong, or at any calumny against those he loved, he rose into grave manliness at once, and seemed like a tall man. His habitual gentleness made his occasional

*Jest and  
earnest.*

<sup>1</sup> Charles Cowden Clarke, in his "Recollections of Writers," takes exception to Haydon's criticisms of Keats, and characterizes them as unjust and inaccurate.

looks of indignation almost terrible.—R. M. MILNES (“Life of Keats”).

*Fest and earnest.*

In my knowledge of fellow-beings, I never knew one who so thoroughly combined the sweetness with the power of gentleness, and the irresistible sway of anger, as Keats. His indignation would have made the boldest grave; and they who had seen him under the influence of injustice and meanness of soul would not forget the expression of his features.—CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE (“Recollections of Keats,” *Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1874).

*Origin of the “Ode to a Nightingale.”*

The admirable “Ode to a Nightingale” was suggested by the continual song of the bird that, in the spring of 1819, had built her nest close to the house, and which often threw Keats into a sort of trance of tranquil pleasure. One morning he took his chair from the breakfast-table, placed it upon the grass-plot under a plum-tree, and sat there for two or three hours with some scraps of paper in his hands. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Brown saw him thrusting them away, as waste paper, behind some books, and had considerable difficulty in putting together and arranging the stanzas of the Ode. Other poems as literally “fugitive” were rescued in much the same way—for he permitted Mr. Brown to copy whatever he could pick up, and sometimes assisted him.—R. M. MILNES (“Life of Keats”).

I was introduced to him by Leigh Hunt, and found him very pleasant, and free from all affecta-

tion in manner and opinion. Indeed, it would be difficult to discover a man with a more bright and open countenance. He was always ready to hear and to reply ; to discuss, to reason, to admit ; and to join in serious talk or common gossip. It has been said that his poetry was affected and effeminate. I can only say that I never encountered a more manly and simple young man. In person he was short, and had eyes large and wonderfully luminous, and a resolute bearing ; not defiant, but well sustained.—B. W. PROCTER ("Autobiographical Fragment," etc.).

*Barry  
Cornwall's  
judgment.*



ROBERT SOUTHEY.

1774-1843.





## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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SOUTHEY was peculiarly and distinctively a man of letters. No man has a better claim to the title. He says in one of his "Colloquies," in a passage which is manifestly autobiographic,—“Excepting that peace which, through God’s infinite mercy, is derived from a higher source, it is to literature, humanly speaking, that I am beholden, not only for the means of subsistence, but for every blessing which I enjoy ; health of mind and activity of mind, contentment, cheerfulness, continual employment, and therefore continual pleasure.”

A more book-loving man never lived. Not Lamb himself cherished his folios, his “midnight darlings,” with a fonder devotion. Year by year his treasures increased. He wore shabby clothes that he might add to his hoard, and before his death he had gathered together fourteen thousand volumes. In old age, when the weary brain could work no more, and when the strong man became weaker than a child, he still wandered about his library, patting and caressing the books which he could no longer read. But he was by no means a merely bookish man. In a letter to one of his old cronies, he says,—“Old friends and old books are the best

things that this world affords (I like old wine also), and in these I am richer than most men (the wine excepted)." His social nature was strong. He was habitually reserved, and far from exuberant in the expression of his feelings; but his intimacies with men had depth and tenacity—qualities which are often lacking in the friendships of more effusive characters. We may be very sure that Robert Southey always valued the old friend more highly than the old book.

In youth his religious and political beliefs were influenced by the teachings of Gibbon and of Rousseau. He declined to take orders because of conscientious scruples. At Oxford he would not permit the barber to decorate his head according to the prevailing mode, but wore his hair long and unpowdered, in imitation of the French revolutionists. He formed a plan, in company with Coleridge and some other friends, to found a Pantisocracy in America—an ideal commonwealth, wherein nothing unclean should find entrance; and he wrote glowing revolutionary poems, one of which—"Wat Tyler"—was published in later years by his enemies, to his no small annoyance. After a few years these ardors abated very perceptibly, and he settled down, together with Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others, into a stanch Tory, and a zealous supporter of the Established Church. The character of his churchmanship may be inferred from the following extract from a letter written by him in mature life:—"I have an instinctive abhorrence of bigotry. When Dissenters talk of the Establishment, they make me feel like a High-Churchman; and when I

get among High-Churchmen, I am ready to take refuge in Dissent."

His change of opinion gained him much applause, and also much censure—to both of which he was charmingly indifferent. In such cases men are wont to use the terms "convert" and "apostate" upon a principle which is as convenient as it is definite; and in strict accordance with this principle it was a matter of course that Southey should be greeted as a convert by those who agreed with him in his later convictions, and it was equally a matter of course that those from whom he had parted company should stigmatize him as a renegade. Assuredly there was nothing base in his motives. It is impossible to escape the conviction that in this, as in all else, he was a high-minded, true-hearted man; and although it must have seemed rather odd that the author of "*Wat Tyler*" should become Poet Laureate and write loyal effusions, there is good reason to believe in his entire sincerity—whatever we may think of his consistency.

Only two works are needed to gain an adequate knowledge of the man; these are, his life and correspondence, edited by his son, the Rev. Charles Cuthbert Southey, and selections from his letters, edited by his son-in-law, J. W. Warter. Southey's letters are among the best in the language, and give a clear view of the mind and character of the writer. They are frank and simple; full of kindly feeling, good sense, and good nonsense—the clever nonsense of a wise man. His correspondence with Caroline Bowles, recently published, edited by Edward Dowden, confirms the impressions made

by the former collections of his letters. The following works are also worthy of attention :—De Quincey's "Literary Reminiscences;" H. F. Chorley's "Autobiography;" Thomas Carlyle's "Reminiscences;" H. C. Robinson's "Diary;" William Hazlitt's "Spirit of the Age;" Joseph Cottle's "Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey;" T. J. Hogg's "Life of Shelley;" S. C. Hall's "Book of Memories;" Sara Coleridge's "Memoirs and Letters;" R. P. Gillies's "Memoirs of a Literary Veteran;" James Hogg's "Reminiscences of Former Days;" Edward Dowden's volume in the "English Men of Letters" series; and the "Autobiography" of Mrs. Anna Eliza Bray, edited by John A. Kempe. This latter work contains a number of interesting and characteristic letters from Southey.

#### LEADING EVENTS OF SOUTHEY'S LIFE.

- 1774. Born, August 12th, in Bristol.
- 1788.—(Aged 14.) A scholar at Westminster.
- 1792.—(Aged 18.) Expelled from Westminster School, for printing an article upon flogging.
- 1793.—(Aged 19.) Enters Oxford University.
- 1794.—(Aged 20.) Studies medicine for a short time. Publishes a volume of poems, the joint work of himself and Robert Lovell. Leaves Oxford. Plans a Pantisocracy, with Coleridge and others.
- 1795.—(Aged 21.) Marries Miss Edith Fricker, privately. Goes to Lisbon with his uncle. Publishes "Joan of Arc."
- 1796.—(Aged 22.) Returns to England, and lives with his wife in Bristol.
- 1797.—(Aged 23.) Resides in London, in order to study law.

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- 1800.—(Aged 26.) Goes to Lisbon with his wife.
- 1801.—(Aged 27.) Returns to England. Publishes "*Thalaba*." Becomes private secretary to the Irish Lord Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- 1802.—(Aged 28.) Resigns his position as Secretary. Lives at Bristol with his wife.
- 1803.—(Aged 29.) Takes his wife to Greta Hall, at Keswick.<sup>1</sup>
- 1805.—(Aged 31.) Publishes "*Madoc*."
- 1807.—(Aged 33.) Receives a pension of two hundred pounds per annum.
- 1809.—(Aged 35.) Contributes to the first numbers of "*The Quarterly Review*."
- 1810.—(Aged 36.) Publishes the "*Curse of Kehama*," and the first volume of "*The History of Brazil*."
- 1813.—(Aged 39.) Becomes Poet Laureate. Publishes "*The Life of Nelson*."
- 1814.—(Aged 40.) Publishes "*Roderick*."
- 1817.—(Aged 43.) "*Wat Tyler*," a revolutionary sketch, written in Southey's youth, is published, without his consent.
- 1820.—(Aged 46.) Publishes "*The Life of Wesley*."
- 1824.—(Aged 50.) Publishes "*The Book of the Church*."
- 1826.—(Aged 52.) Elected to Parliament, but declines to serve.
- 1829.—(Aged 55.) Publishes "*Colloquies*."
- 1834.—(Aged 60.) Publishes "*The Doctor*."
- 1835.—(Aged 61.) Publishes "*The Life of Cowper*." Declines a baronetcy, offered to him by Sir Robert Peel. Receives an addition of 300*l.* per annum to his pension.
- 1837.—(Aged 63.) His wife dies.
- 1839.—(Aged 65.) Marries Miss Catherine Bowles.
- 1843.—(68 years, 7 months.) Dies, March 21st.
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<sup>1</sup> This continued to be Southey's residence throughout the rest of his life.



## ROBERT SOUTHEY.

ALMOST the only records of Southey's boyhood are contained in some autobiographical letters, which he wrote to his friend John May, and which are inserted in C. C. Southey's life of Robert Southey.<sup>1</sup> Much of his time in childhood was passed with an eccentric maiden aunt, at Bath, who kept him quiet all day, and took him to the theatre almost every evening. "I had little propensity," he says, "to any boyish sports, and less expertness in them. But if I was unapt at ordinary sports, a botanist or an entomologist would have found me a willing pupil in those years. I knew every variety of grass blossom that the fields produced, and in what situations to look for each." As to his reading, he tells us, "I went through Beaumont and Fletcher before I was eight years old: circumstances enable me to recollect the time accurately." And this was in addition to Shakespeare. Before he was fourteen he had read, according to his own account, translations of Tasso and Ariosto, Mickle's translation of the "Lusiad," Pope's "Homer," Spenser's "Faery Queen," Sydney's "Arcadia," the

*Boyhood  
and youth.*

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<sup>1</sup> Southey (Rev. Charles Cuthbert). Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey. 6 vols. London, 1850.

*Boyhood  
and youth.*

works of Josephus, and many tales and romances, and had made several attempts to compose dramas and epics.

He had some trouble in gaining admittance at Oxford, for he had been expelled from Westminster, his offence having been the publication of a satirical attack upon flogging. He remained at Oxford less than two years, scandalizing the authorities and the great body of his fellow-students—the one, by his openly expressed republicanism, the other, by the decency and regularity of his life. In later years he said that he learnt nothing at Oxford but a little rowing and swimming. His son, C. C. Southey says, “He was, indeed, but little disposed to pay much deference either to the discipline or the etiquette of the college. It was usual for all the members to have their hair regularly dressed and powdered according to the prevailing fashion, and the college barber waited upon the freshmen as a matter of course. My father, however, peremptorily refused to put himself under his hands ; and I well remember his speaking of the astonishment depicted in the man’s face, and of his earnest remonstrances on the impropriety he was going to commit in entering the dining-hall with his long hair, which curled beautifully, in its primitive state. A little surprise was manifested at first, but the example was quickly followed by others.”

*Personal  
appearance.*

Southey was, in person, somewhat taller than Wordsworth, being about five feet eleven in height, or a trifle more, whilst Wordsworth was about five feet ten ; and, partly from having slender limbs,



partly from being more symmetrically formed about the shoulders than Wordsworth, he struck one as a better and lighter figure, to the effect of which his dress contributed ; for he wore pretty constantly a short jacket and pantaloons, and had much the air of a Tyrolese mountaineer. . . . His hair was black, and yet his complexion was fair ; his eyes I believe to be hazel and large ; but I will not vouch for that fact ; his nose aquiline ; and he has a remarkable habit of looking up into the air, as if looking at abstractions. The expression of his face was that of a very acute and an aspiring man. So far, it was even noble, as it conveyed a feeling of a serene and gentle pride, habitually familiar with elevating subjects of contemplation. And yet it was impossible that this pride could have been offensive to any body, chastened as it was by the most unaffected modesty.—THOMAS DEQUINCEY ("Literary Reminiscences").<sup>1</sup>

*Personal  
appearance.*

His forehead was very broad ; his height was five feet eleven inches ; his complexion rather dark, the eyebrows large and arched, the eye well shaped and dark brown, the mouth somewhat prominent, muscular, and very variously expressive, the chin small in proportion to the upper features of his face. He always, while in Keswick, wore a cap in his walks, and partly from habit, partly from the make of his head and shoulders, we thought he never looked well or like himself in a hat. He was of a very spare frame, but of great activity, and not

<sup>1</sup> DeQuincey (Thomas). Literary Reminiscences. 2 vols. 16mo. Ticknor & Fields, Boston, 1851.

*Personal  
appearance.*

showing any evidence of a weak constitution. My father's countenance, like his character, seems to have softened down from a certain wildness of expression to a more sober and thoughtful cast ; and many thought him a handsomer man in age than in youth ; his eye retaining always its brilliancy, and his countenance its play of expression. Though he did not continue to let his hair hang down on his shoulders according to the whim of his youthful days, yet he always wore a greater quantity than is usual ; and once, on his arrival in town, Chantrey's first greetings to him were accompanied with an injunction to go and get his hair cut. When I first remember it, it was turning from a rich brown to the steel shade, whence it rapidly became almost snowy white, losing none of its remarkable thickness, and clustering in abundant curls over his massive brow.—C. C. SOUTHEY ("Life of Southey").

He is in person above the middle size, but slender, with something of the stoop and listless air of an habitual student. A retiring forehead, shaded in part by thick curled hair, already gray ; strongly marked arching eyebrows ; uncommonly full, dark eyes, blue I incline to think ; a thin but very prominent nose ; a mouth large and eloquent, and a retreating but well-defined chin.—E. D. GRIFFIN ("Remains").<sup>1</sup>

I never met any literary man who so thoroughly answered my expectations as Southey. His face is

<sup>1</sup> Griffin (Rev. Edmund Dorr). Remains compiled by Francis Griffin. 2 vols. 12mo. New York, 1831.

at once shrewd, thoughtful, and quick, if not irritable, in its expression ; a singular deficiency of space in its lower portion, but no deficiency of feature or expression ; his manner cold, but still ; in conversation, bland and gentle, and not nearly so dogmatic as his writings would lead one to imagine.—H. F. CHORLEY ("Autobiography").

*Personal  
appearance.*

In 1836, Southey visited Mr. and Mrs. Bray. Mrs. Anna Eliza Bray, in her autobiography,<sup>1</sup> gives the following description, written by her husband, of Southey's appearance :—"In person he is tall and thin. His nose is prominent, but neither Roman nor aquiline ; beginning, as it were with the former, and ending with the latter. His hair is so gray as to be almost white ; and so thick and curling, that one of our servants thought he wore a wig. In this his eyebrows form a striking contrast, being dark, and the more conspicuous from their size. His eyes, also, are dark and prominent, with a certain opposition of expression ; sometimes flashing with energy, but more frequently melting with softness."

He was the very *beau ideal* of a poet—singularly impressive, tall, somewhat slight, slow in his movements, and very dignified in manner, with the eye of a hawk, and with sharp features, and an aquiline nose, that carried the similitude somewhat further. His forehead was broad and high, his eyebrows dark, his hair profuse and long. . . . I can see

<sup>1</sup> Bray (Anna Eliza). Autobiography. Edited by John A. Kempe. 8vo. London, 1884.

*Personal  
appearance.*

vividly, even now, his graceful and winning smile. To the commonest observer he was obviously a man who had lived more with books than men, whose converse had chiefly been with "the mighty minds of old."—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Southey was a man towards well up in the fifties ;<sup>1</sup> hair gray, not yet hoary, well setting off his fine, clear brown complexion ; head and face both smallish, as indeed the figure was while seated ; features finely cut ; eyes, brow, mouth, good in their kind—expressive all, and even vehemently so, but betokening rather keenness than depth either of intellect or character ; a serious, human, honest, but sharp, almost fierce-looking, thin man, with very much of the militant in his aspect—in the eyes especially was a visible mixture of sorrow and of anger, or of angry contempt, as if his indignant fight with the world had not yet ended in victory, but also that it never should in defeat. A man you were willing to hear speak. . . . I recollect my astonishment when Southey at last completely rose from his chair to shake hands. He had only half risen and nodded on my coming in ; and all along I had counted him a lean little man ; but now he shot suddenly aloft into a lean tall one, all legs, in shape and stature like a pair of tongs, which peculiarity my surprise doubtless exaggerated to me, but only made it the more notable and entertaining.—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1836 or '37.

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle (Thomas). *Reminiscences*. Edited by J. A. Froude. London and New York, 1881.

There was . . . an habitual delicacy in his conversation, evidencing that cheerfulness and wit might exist without ribaldry, grossness, or profanation. He neither violated decorum himself, nor tolerated it in others. I have been present when a trespasser of the looser class has received a rebuke, I might say a castigation, well deserved, and not readily forgotten. His abhorrence also of injustice, or unworthy conduct, in its diversified shapes, had all the decision of a Roman censor; while this apparent austerity was associated, when in the society he liked, with so bland and playful a spirit, that it abolished all constraint, and rendered him one of the most agreeable, as well as the most intelligent of companions.—JOSEPH COTTLE (“Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey”).<sup>1</sup>

*Conversa-  
tion.*

Mr. Southey's conversation has a little resemblance to a commonplace book; his habitual deportment to a piece of clock-work. He is not remarkable either as a reasoner or an observer; but he is quick, unaffected, replete with anecdote, various and retentive in his reading, and exceedingly happy in his play upon words. . . . We have chiefly seen Mr. Southey in company where few people appear to advantage, we mean in that of Mr. Coleridge. He has not certainly the same range of speculation, nor the same flow of sounding words, but he makes up by the details of knowledge, and by a scrupulous correctness of statement for what

<sup>1</sup> Cottle (Joseph). *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey.* Crown 8vo. London, 1847.

*Convers-  
ation.*

he wants of originality of thought, or impetuous declamation. The tones of Mr. Coleridge's voice are eloquence ; those of Mr. Southey are meagre, shrill, and dry. Mr. Coleridge's *forte* is conversation, and he is conscious of this ; Mr. Southey evidently considers writing his stronghold, and if gravelled in an argument, or at a loss for an explanation, refers to something he has written on the subject, or brings out his portfolio, doubled down in dog-ears, in confirmation of some fact.—W. HAZLITT ("Spirit of the Age").<sup>1</sup>

He converses very rapidly, both in language and ideas. Indeed, it is somewhat difficult to keep pace with his mind, in its transition from one idea to another. . . . He asserts with great energy and decision ; but this seems to arise, not from a disposition to dogmatize, but from a natural impetuosity and perspicacity of mind. He uses no gesticulation ; but his features and his person are instinct with animation, and alive with nervous action. He frequently walks up and down the room, as if to expend a superabundant quantity of excitement.—E. D. GRIFFIN ("Remains").

In his conversation Southey was perfectly easy and unpretending, never shunning to speak his real sentiments of men, or of principles, either of a public or a private nature. And though very caustic sometimes, and even severe in his remarks, yet

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<sup>1</sup> Hazlitt (William). The Spirit of the Age. 16mo. London, 1825.

generally far more inclining to the good-natured in his opinions and in his discourse.—ANNA ELIZA BRAY (“Autobiography”).

*Conversa-  
tion.*

The characteristics of his manner, as of his appearance, were lightness and strength, an easy and happy composure as the accustomed mood, with much mobility at the same time, so that he could be readily excited into any degree of animation in discourse, speaking, if the subject moved him much, with extraordinary fire and force, though always in light, laconic sentences. When so moved, the fingers of his right hand often rested against his mouth and quivered through nervous susceptibility. But, excitable as he was in conversation, he was never angry or irritable; nor can there be any greater mistake concerning him than that into which some persons have fallen when they have inferred, from the fiery vehemence with which he could give utterance to moral anger in verse or prose, that he was personally ill-tempered or irascible. He was, in truth, a man whom it was hardly possible to quarrel with or offend personally and face to face. . . . He said of himself that he was tolerant of persons, though intolerant of opinions . . .

He was averse from argumentation, and would commonly quit a subject when it was passing into that shape, with a quiet and good-humored indication of the view in which he rested. He talked most and with most interest about books and about public affairs; less, indeed hardly at all, about the characters and qualities of men in private life.

—SIR HENRY TAYLOR (Quoted in C. C. Southey's "Life of Southey").

*Social  
traits.*

The point in which Southey's manner failed the most in conciliating regard, was, in all which related to the external expressions of friendliness. No man could be more sincerely hospitable—no man more essentially disposed to give up even his time (the possession which he most valued) to the service of his friends. But there was an air of reserve and distance about him—the reserve of a lofty, self-respecting mind, but, perhaps, a little too freezing—in his treatment of all persons who were not among the *corps* of his ancient fireside friends. —THOMAS DEQUINCEY ("Literary Reminiscences").

In the society of strangers or of acquaintances he seemed to take more interest in the subjects spoken of than in the persons present, his manner being that of natural courtesy and general benevolence without distinction of individuals. Had there been some tincture of social vanity in him, perhaps he would have been brought into closer relations with those whom he met in society; but, though invariably kind and careful of their feelings, he was indifferent to the manner in which they regarded him, or (as the phrase is) to his *effect* in society; and they might perhaps be conscious that the kindness they received was what flowed naturally and inevitably to all, that they had nothing to give in return which was of value to him, and that no individual relations were established.—SIR HENRY TAYLOR (quoted in C. C. Southey's "Life of Southey").



He concealed . . . beneath a reserved manner, a most acutely sensitive mind, and a warmth and kindness of feeling which was only understood by few, indeed, perhaps, not thoroughly by any. . . . On one particular point I remember his often regretting his constitutional bashfulness and reserve ; and that was, because, added to his retired life and the nature of his pursuits, it prevented him from knowing anything of the persons among whom he lived. . . . With those persons who were occasionally employed about the house, he was most familiarly friendly, and these regarded him with a degree of affectionate reverence that could not be surpassed.—C. C. SOUTHEY ("Life of R. Southey").

*Shy, but kindly.*

Your feelings go naked ; I cover mine with a bear-skin : I will not say that you harden yours by your mode, but I am sure that mine are the warmer for their clothing. . . . It is possible, or probable, that I err as much as you in an opposite extreme, and may make enemies where you would make friends.—ROBERT SOUTHEY (Letter to S. T. Coleridge, 1804).

*His own opinion of his social character.*

No man has ever written more faithfully from his heart ; but my manners have not the same habitual unreserve as my pen. A disgust at the professions of friendship, and feeling, and sentiment in those who have neither the one nor the other, has, perhaps, insensibly led me to an opposite extreme ; and in wishing rather *esse quam videri*, I may sometimes have appeared what I am not.—ROBERT SOUTHEY (Letter to C. H. Townshend, 1816).

*His own  
opinion of  
his social  
character.*

Through a constitutional bashfulness, which the publicity of authorship has not overcome, and through the sort of left-handed management (I do not mean *sinister*) which that bashfulness occasions, I have repeatedly appeared neglectful of others, and have really been so of my own interests. Upon the score of such neglect, no man living has more cause for reproach than I have.—ROBERT SOUTHEY (Letter to J. Rickman, 1827).

*Speech-  
making.*

I never made a speech since I was a school-boy, and I am very certain that I never had any talent for speaking. Had I gone to the bar, my intent was to have spoken always as briefly and perspicuously as possible. . . . I have none of that readiness which is required for public life, or even which is looked for among *diners out*.—ROBERT SOUTHEY (Letter to Sir H. Taylor, 1825).

Southey told me that he would as lief sink through the earth as make a speech in public.—R. SHELTON MACKENZIE ("Memoir of Wilson").

*His home  
and his  
books.*

The house which for so many years was his residence at Keswick, though well situated both for convenience and for beauty of prospect, was unattractive in external appearance. . . . Having originally been two houses, afterward thrown together, it consisted of a good many small rooms, connected by long passages, all of which, with great ingenuity, he made available for holding books, with which, indeed, the house was lined from top to bottom. His own sitting-room, which was the

largest in the house, was filled with the handsomest of them, arranged with much taste, according to his own fashion, with due regard to size, color, and condition ; and he used to contemplate these, his carefully accumulated and much-prized treasures, with even more pleasure and pride than the greatest connoisseur his finest specimens of the old masters.—C. C. SOUTHEY (“Life of R. Southey”).

*His home  
and his  
books.*

He was a most thoroughly domestic man, in that his whole pleasure and happiness was centred in his home ; but yet, from the course of his pursuits, his family necessarily saw but little of him. . . . Every day, every hour had its allotted employment ; always were there engagements to publishers imperatively requiring punctual fulfilment ; always the current expenses of a large household to take anxious thoughts for. . . . “My ways,” he used to say, “are as broad as the king’s high road, and my means lie in an inkstand.” Yet, notwithstanding the value which every moment of his time thus necessarily bore, unlike most literary men, he was never ruffled in the slightest degree by the interruptions of his family, even on the most trivial occasions ; the book or the pen was ever laid down with a smile, and he was ready to answer any question, or to enter with youthful readiness into any temporary topic of amusement or interest.—C. C. SOUTHEY (“Life of R. Southey”).

*Domes-  
ticity.*

Southey’s letters bear witness to his domestic nature ; the following passages have been selected from many which are equally suggestive :

*A home-  
loving man.*

“Oh dear ; oh dear ! there is such a comfort in one's old coat and old shoes, one's own chair and own fireside, one's own writing-desk and own library—with a little girl climbing up to my neck, and saying, ‘Don't go to London, papa—you must stay with Edith ;’ and a little boy, whom I have taught to speak the language of cats, dogs, cuckoos, and jackasses, etc., before he can articulate a word of his own ;—there is such a comfort in all these things, that *transportation* to London for four or five weeks seems a heavier punishment than any sins of mine deserve.”

“Here then I am, nothing the worse for having been wheeled over fifteen hundred miles in the course of fifteen weeks. . . . I have taken again to my old coat and old shoes ; dine at the reasonable hour of four, enjoy as I used to do the wholesome indulgence of a nap after dinner, drink tea at six, sup at half past nine, spend an hour over a sober folio and a glass of black currant rum with warm water and sugar, and then to bed. Days seemed like weeks while I was away, . . . and now that I am settling to my wonted round of occupations, the week passes like a day.”

*Methodical  
habits.*

In associating with Southey, not only was it necessary to salvation to refrain from touching his books, but various rites, ceremonies, and usages must be rigidly observed. At certain appointed hours only was he open to conversation ; at the seasons which had been predestined from all eternity for holding intercourse with his friends. Every

hour of the day had its commission—every half hour was assigned to its own peculiar, undeviating function. The indefatigable student gave a detailed account of his most painstaking life, every moment of which was fully employed and strictly prearranged, to a certain literary Quaker lady.

*Methodical  
habits.*

“I rise at five throughout the year ; from six till eight I read Spanish ; then French for one hour ; Portuguese, next, for half an hour,—my watch lying on the table ; I give two hours to poetry ; I write prose for two hours ; I translate so long ; I make extracts so long,” and so of the rest until the poor fellow had fairly fagged himself into his bed again. “And, pray, when dost thou think, friend ?” she asked, drily, to the great discomfiture of the future Laureate.—T. J. HOGG (“Life of Shelley”).

His course of life was the most regular and simple possible. . . . When it is said that breakfast was at nine, after a little reading, dinner at four, tea at six, supper at half past nine, and the intervals filled up with reading and writing, except that he regularly walked between two and four, and took a short sleep before tea, the outline of his day during those long seasons when he was in full work will have been given. After supper, when the business of the day seemed to be over, though he generally took a book, he remained with his family, and was open to enter into conversation, to amuse and to be amused.—C. C. SOUTHEY (“Life of R. Southey”).

*Regularity  
of his  
routine.*

Last night I began the Preface (to *Specimens of English Poets*)—huzza ! And now, Grosvenor, let

Methods of  
work.

me tell you what I have to do. I am writing—1. *The History of Portugal*; 2. *The Chronicle of the Cid*; 3. *The Curse of Kehama*; 4. *Espriella's Letters*. Look you, all these *I am* writing. . . . By way of interlude comes in this preface. Don't swear, and bid me do one thing at a time. I tell you I can't afford to do one thing at a time—no, nor two neither; and it is only by doing many things that I contrive to do so much: for I cannot work long together at anything without hurting myself, and so I do everything by heats; then, by the time I am tired of one, my inclination for another is come round.—ROBERT SOUTHEY (letter to Grosvenor Bedford).

His long and valuable works advanced slowly, because he always had different tasks on hand, and like a thorough-bred man of business, could at any time turn from one to another; but they advanced unremittingly; they were not scrawled and patched up *invitâ Minervâ*, careless of all but the citizen's only object, to obtain immediate pelf; but they were finished so as to gain the author's approbation in the first place. Among his minor peculiarities I cannot but remember how in his unequalled calligraphy, he revived the accomplishment of monastic scribes in the middle ages, and how in divers instances he completed a long MS., bound it handsomely, and kept it for years on his shelves, before he thought of publication. *Labor ipsa voluptas erat*, even without one particle of pecuniary gain.—R. P. GILLIES ("Memoirs of a Literary Veteran").<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gillies (Robert Pearce). *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran*. 3 vols., 12mo. London, 1854.

With respect to his mode of acquiring and arranging the contents of a book, it was somewhat peculiar. He was as rapid a reader as could be conceived, having the power of perceiving by a glance down the page whether it contained anything which he was likely to make use of—a slip of paper lay on his desk, and was used as a marker, and with a slight pencilled S he would note the passage, put a reference on the paper, with some brief note of the subject, which he could transfer to his note-book, and in the course of a few hours he had classified and arranged everything in the work which it was likely he would ever want.—C. C. SOUTHEY (“Life of R. Southey”).

*Manner of  
reading.*

When George Ticknor met Southey in 1819, he found that his light reading, after supper, was in the fifty-three folio volumes of the “Acta Sanctorum.” In 1823 Southey wrote to G. S. Bedford, as follows: “To give you some notion of my heterogeneous reading, I am at this time regularly going through Shakespeare, Mosheim’s Ecclesiastical History, Rabelais, Barrow, and Aitzema, a Dutch historian of the seventeenth century, in eleven huge full folios. The Dutchman I take after supper, with my punch.” He frequently mentions in his letters the habit which he had acquired of reading as he walked.

*An omnivorous  
reader.*

Having had neither new coat nor hat since the Edithling was born, you may suppose I was in want of both; so at Edinburgh I was to rig myself, and, moreover, lay in new boots and pantaloons. How-

*Books  
rather than  
clothes.*

*Books  
rather than  
clothes.*

beit, on considering the really respectable appearance which my old ones made for a traveller, and considering, moreover, that as learning was better than house or land, it certainly must be much better than fine clothes, I laid out all my money in books, and came home to wear out my old clothes in the winter.—ROBERT SOUTHEY (letter to L. Southey, 1805).

*Wholly ab-  
sorbed in  
books.*

*January 18th, 1839.* I walked out with Wordsworth. . . . We talked of Southey. Wordsworth spoke of him with great feeling and affection. He said, "It is painful to see how completely dead Southey is become to all but books. He is amiable and obliging, but when he gets away from his books he seems restless, and as if out of his element. I therefore hardly see him for years together." Now all this I had myself observed. Rogers also had noticed it.<sup>1</sup>—HENRY CRABB ROBINSON ("Diary").

*Life out-of-  
doors.*

His greatest relaxation was in a mountain excursion or a picnic by the side of one of the lakes, tarns, or streams; and these parties, of which he was the life and soul, will long live in the recollections of those who shared them. An excellent pedestrian (thinking little of a walk of twenty-five miles when upward of sixty), he usually headed the "infantry" on these occasions, looking on those gentlemen as idle mortals who indulged in the lux-

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that when this observation was made, in 1839, Southey was nearing the close of his life, a worn-out man, whose faculties were already seriously impaired.



ury of a mountain pony.—C. C. SOUTHEY (“Life of R. Southey”).

In Southey's fifty-first year he writes to Rickman, “I overcome the dislike of solitary walking, and every day, unless it be a settled rain, walk long enough, and far, and fast enough, to require the wholesome process of rubbing down on my return.” In his fifty-sixth year he tells Allan Cunningham, “I am put to the daily expense of two hours' walking, . . . and when the weather will allow me to take a book in my hand, it is not altogether lost time. I can read small print at the pace of three miles an hour; and when I have read enough to chew the cud upon, then in goes the pocket volume, and I add a mile an hour to my speed.” In his sixtieth year he writes to Bedford, “The day before yesterday I commanded a cart party to Ilonister Crag, and walked the whole way myself, twenty-one and a half miles by Edward Hill's pedometer, without difficulty or fatigue.”

*Life out-of-doors.*

Southey wrote to two old friends, as follows:—“Oh Grosvenor, is it not a pity that two men who love nonsense so cordially and naturally and *bonâ-fidically* as you and I, should be three hundred miles asunder? For my part, I insist upon it that there is no sense so good as your honest, genuine nonsense.”

*Playfulness.*

“I am quite as noisy as I ever was, and should take as much delight as ever in showering stones through the hole of the staircase against your room door, and hearing with what hearty good earnest

*Playful-  
ness.*

‘you fool’ was vociferated in indignation against me in return. Oh, dear Lightfoot what a blessing it is to have a boy’s heart ! It is as great a blessing in carrying one through this world, as to have a child’s spirit will be in fitting us for the next.”

*Fondness  
for cats.*

My father’s fondness for cats has been occasionally shown by allusions in his letters, and in “The Doctor” is inserted an amusing memorial of the various cats which at different times were inmates of Greta Hall. He rejoiced in bestowing upon them the strangest appellations ; and it was not a little amusing to see a kitten answer to the name of some Italian singer or Indian chief, or hero of a German fairy tale, and often names and titles were heaped one upon another, till the possessor, unconscious of the honor conveyed, used to “set up his eyes and look” in wonderment. Mr. Bedford had an equal liking for the feline race, and occasional notices of their favorites therefore passed between them, of which the following records the death of one of the greatest :—

“Alas ! Grosvenor, this day poor old Rumpel was found dead, after as long and happy a life as cat could wish for, if cats form wishes on that subject.

“His full titles were :

“The Most Noble the Archduke Rumpelstiltzchen, Marquis Macbum, Earl Tomlemagne, Baron Raticide, Waowhler, and Skraatch.

“There should be a court mourning in Catland, and if the Dragon<sup>1</sup> wear a black ribbon round his

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<sup>1</sup> A cat of Mr. Bedford’s.

neck, or a band of crape à la militaire round one of his fore paws, it will be but a becoming mark of respect. . . . I believe we are each and all, servants included, more sorry for his loss, or rather, more affected by it, than any of us would like to confess."—C. C. SOUTHEY ("Life of R. Southey").

*Fondness  
for cats.*

Southey's sensitiveness I had noticed on the first occasion as one of his characteristic qualities, but was nothing like aware of the extent of it till our next meeting. This was a few evenings afterwards, Taylor giving some dinner, or party, in honor of his guest; if dinner, I was not at that, but must have undertaken for the evening sequel, as less incommodious to me, less unwholesome more especially. I remember entering, in the same house, but up stairs this time, a pleasant little drawing-room, in which, in well lighted, secure enough condition, sat Southey in full dress, silently reclining, and as yet no other company. We saluted suitably; touched ditto on the vague initiatory points; and were still there, when, by way of coming closer, I asked mildly, with no appearance of special interest, but with more than I really felt, "Do you know De Quincey?" (the opium-eater whom I knew to have lived in Cumberland as his neighbor). "Yes, sir," said Southey, with extraordinary animosity, "and if you have opportunity, I'll thank you to tell him he is one of the greatest scoundrels living!" I laughed lightly, said I had myself little acquaintance with the man, and could not wish to recommend myself by that message. Southey's face, as I looked at it, was become of slate-color, the eyes glancing, the

*Nervous  
excitability.*

*Nervous excitability.*

attitude rigid, the figure altogether a picture of Rhadamanthine rage—that is, rage conscious to itself of being just. He doubtless felt I would expect some explanation from him. “I have told Hartley Coleridge,” said he, “that he ought to take a strong cudgel, proceed straight to Edinburgh, and give De Quincey, publicly in the streets there, a sound beating, as a calumniator, cowardly spy, traitor, base betrayer of the hospitable social hearth, for one thing.”<sup>1</sup> . . .

In a few minutes we let the topic drop, I helping what I could, and he seemed to feel as if he had done a little wrong, and was bound to show himself more than usually amicable and social, especially with me, for the rest of the evening, which he did in effect, though I quite forget the details, only that I had a good deal of talk with him, in the circle of the others, and had again more than once to notice the singular readiness of the blushes ; amiable red blush, beautiful like a young girl’s, when you touched genially the pleasant theme, and serpent-like flash of blue or black blush (this far, very far the rarer kind, though it did recur too) when you struck upon the opposite. All details of the evening, except that primary one, are clean gone ; but the effect was interesting, pleasantly stimulating, and surprising. I said to myself, “How has this man contrived, with such a nervous system, to keep alive for near sixty years ? Now blushing under his gray hairs, rosy like a maiden of fifteen ; now slaty

<sup>1</sup> This outburst was in consequence of De Quincey’s having published some personal reminiscences of Coleridge and others, which were not altogether flattering.

almost, like a rattlesnake or fiery serpent? How has he not been torn to pieces long since, under such furious pulling this way and that? He must have somewhere a great deal of methodic virtue in him; I suppose, too, his heart is thoroughly honest, which helps considerably."—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

*Nervous excitability.*

Once I saw in him a strong expression of indignation; it was when speaking of the unjustifiable attack that had been made upon him by Lord Byron. He was at the moment standing with his back to the fire, and I was near him. I saw a great change in him as he spoke; the nostrils . . . seemed to dilate, and there was a grandeur, a dignity about the whole countenance which was very striking. I saw that, although so gentle in ordinary moods, Southey could be awful, when strongly and justly influenced by a passion of indignation.—ANNA ELIZA BRAY ("Autobiography").

The truth is, that though some persons, whose knowledge of me is skin-deep, suppose I have no nerves, because I have great self-control as far as regards the surface, if it were not for great self-management, and what may be called a strict intellectual regimen, I should very soon be in a deplorable state of what is called nervous disease, and this would have been the case any time during the last twenty years.—ROBERT SOUTHEY (Letter to G. S. Bedford, 1818).

*Self-control.*

I reckoned him (with those blue blushes and those

*Self-control.*

red) to be the perhaps excitablest of all men, and that a deep mute motion of conscience had spoken to him, "You are capable of running mad, if you don't take care. Acquire habitudes; stick firm as adamant to them at all times, and work—continually work!"—THOMAS CARLYLE ("Reminiscences").

*Self-consciousness.*

An illustrative anecdote was told me by the sexton of Crosthwaite Church, who, however, had little to say of the poet, except that he seldom saw him smile. He met him often in his walks, but he seemed pensive, full of thought, and looked as if his life was elsewhere than on earth. The anecdote is this. ¶ Southey had a great dislike to be "looked at;" and although very regular in his attendance at church, he would stay away when he knew there were many tourists in the neighborhood. One Sunday, two strangers who had a great desire to see the poet besought the sexton to point him out to them. The sexton, knowing that this must be done secretly, said, "I will take you up the aisle, and, in passing, touch the pew in which he sits." He did so, and no doubt the strangers had "a good stare." A few days after, the sexton met Southey in the street of Keswick. The poet looked somewhat sternly at him, said, "*Don't do it again,*" and passed on, leaving the conscience-stricken sexton to ponder over the "crime" in which he had been detected by the poet.—S. C. HALL ("Book of Memories").

Concerning the intercourse of these two remarkable persons, I have heard from Shelley, and from others, several anecdotes.

“Southey had a large collection of books, very many of them old books, some rare works,—books in many languages, more particularly in Spanish. The shelves extended over the walls of every room in his large, dismal house in Keswick ; they were in the bedrooms, and even down the stairs. This I never saw elsewhere. I took out some volume one day, as I was going down-stairs with him. Southey looked at me, as if he was displeased, so I put it back again instantly, and I never ventured to take down one of his books another time. I used to glance my eye eagerly over the backs of the books, and read their titles, as I went up or down stairs. I could not help doing so, but I think he did not quite approve of it. Do you know that Southey did not like to have his books touched? Do you know why?”

*Shelley's intercourse  
with  
Southey.*

“No ! I do not.”

“You do not know? How I hate that there should be anything which you do not know ! For who will tell me if you will not?”

“I only know that persons who have large libraries sometimes have the same feeling.”

“How strange that a man should have many thousands of books, and should have a secret in every book, which he cannot bear that anybody should know but himself. How rare and grim ! Do you believe, then, that Southey really had a secret in every one of his books?”

“No ! I do not, indeed, Bysshe.”

After musing for some minutes, he added : “There were not secrets in all his books, certainly, for he often took one down himself and showed me some

*Shelley's intercourse  
with  
Southey.*

remarkable passage ; and then he would let me keep it as long as I pleased, and turn over the leaves, if he had taken it down himself ; so there could be no secret there. And yet," he continued, after further reflection, "perhaps there was a secret ; but he thought that I could not find it out."

"Were the passages which he showed you really remarkable?"

"They might be, sometimes ; but for the most part they were not ; at least, I did not think them so. They usually appeared trifling. He never discussed any subject ; he gave his own opinion, commonly, in a very absolute manner ; he used to lay down the law, to dogmatize. What he said was seldom his own,—it seldom came from himself. He repeated long quotations, read extracts which he had made, or took down books and read from them aloud, or pointed out something for me to read, which would settle the matter at once without appeal. His conversation was rather interesting, and only moderately instructive ; he was not so much a man as a living commonplace book, a talking album filled with long extracts from long-forgotten authors on unimportant subjects. Still his intercourse was very agreeable. I liked much to be with him ; besides, he was a good man, and exceedingly kind."—T. J. HOGG ("Life of Shelley").

*Reads  
Shelley  
to sleep.*

Southey was addicted to reading his terrible epics—before they were printed—to any one who seemed to be a fit subject for the cruel experiment. He soon set his eyes on the new-comer, and one day having effected the caption of Shelley, he immedi-



ately lodged him securely in a little study up-stairs, carefully locking the door upon himself and his prisoner and putting the key in his waistcoat-pocket. There was a window in the room, it is true, but it was so high above the ground that Baron Trenck himself would not have attempted it. "Now you shall be delighted," Southey said, "but sit down." Poor Bysshe sighed, and took his seat at the table. The author seated himself opposite, and placing his MS. on the table before him, began to read slowly and distinctly. . . . Charmed with his own composition the admiring author read on, varying his voice occasionally, to point out the finer passages and invite applause. There was no commendation ; no criticism ; all was hushed. This was strange. Southey raised his eyes from the neatly-written MS. ; Shelley had disappeared. This was still more strange. Escape was impossible ; every precaution had been taken, yet he had vanished. Shelley had glided noiselessly from his chair to the floor, and the insensible young vandal lay buried in profound sleep underneath the table.—T. J. Hogg ("Life of Shelley").

*Reads  
Shelley  
to sleep.*

Here is a man in Keswick, who acts upon me as my own ghost would do. He is just what I was in 1794. His name is Shelley, son to the member for Shoreham ; with £6,000 a year entailed upon him, and as much more in his father's power to cut off. Beginning with romances of ghosts and murder, and with poetry at Eton, he passed, at Oxford, into metaphysics ; printed half a dozen pages, which he entitled "The Necessity of Atheism ;" . . . was

*Southey's  
account of  
Shelley.*

*Southey's  
account of  
Shelley.*

expelled in consequence ; married a girl of seventeen, after being turned out of doors by his father ; and here they both are, in lodgings, living upon £200 a year, which her father allows them. He is come to the fittest physician in the world. At present he has got to the Pantheistic stage of philosophy, and, in the course of a week, I expect he will be a Berkeleyan, for I have put him upon a course of Berkeley. It has surprised him a good deal to meet, for the first time in his life, with a man who perfectly understands him, and does him full justice. I tell him that all the difference between us is that he is nineteen and I am thirty-seven.<sup>1</sup>—ROBERT SOUTHEY (Letter to G. S. Bedford, 1812).

*Unmusical.*

We talked of church music, and I mentioned the *Messiah* of Handel. He told me that he had no ear for music ; he did not know what was in tune or out of tune ; yet he did not dislike music ; but some one had explained to him, and made him comprehend in what had consisted the excellencies of Handel.—ANNA ELIZA BRAY ("Autobiography").

*Generosity.*

Southey freely gave much of his time and labor, throughout the course of his laborious life, to help literary workers who were less gifted or less fortunate than himself. There are many instances of his ungrudging kindness to poor authors and their families. He gave advice, revised manuscripts, and

<sup>1</sup> In the volume of correspondence between Southey and Caroline Bowles, edited by Edward Dowden, and published in 1881, will be found some very interesting letters which passed between Southey and Shelley.

edited books ; and this when every hour was of practical importance to him. But he not only gave his time and his labor, he also gave his hard-earned money. One instance of this will suffice to show the character of the man. The story is well told by Edward Dowden, in his recent book upon Southey,<sup>1</sup> the facts being derived from C. C. Southey's work :—

*Generosity.*

“Notwithstanding his unwearied exertions, his modest scale of expenditure, and his profitable connection with the *Quarterly Review*, . . . he never had a year's income in advance until that year, late in his life, in which Sir Robert Peel offered him a baronetcy. In 1818, the lucky payment of a bad debt enabled him to buy 300*l.* in the Three-percents. ‘I have 100*l.* already there,’ he writes, ‘and shall then be worth 12*l.* per annum.’ By 1821 this sum had grown to 625*l.*, the gatherings of half a lifetime. In that year his friend John May, whose acquaintance he had made in Portugal, and to whose kindness he was a debtor, suffered the loss of his fortune. As soon as Southey had heard the state of affairs, his decision was formed. ‘By this post,’ he tells his friend, ‘I write to Bedford, desiring that he will transfer to you 625*l.* in the Three-percents. I wish it was more, and that I had more at my command in any way. I shall in the spring, if I am paid for the first volume of my History as soon as it is finished. One hundred I should, at all events, have sent you then. It shall be as much more as I receive.’ And he goes on in cheery words to invite

<sup>1</sup> Dowden (Edward). Southey. 12mo (English Men of Letters. Edited by J. Morley). London and New York, 1880.

*Generosity.*

John May to break away from business and come to Keswick, there to lay in 'a pleasant store of recollections which in all moods of mind are wholesome.' One rejoices that Southey, poor of worldly goods, knew the happiness of being so simple and nobly generous."

*Abhorrence  
of cruelty.*

I have seen his cheek glow, and his eye darken and almost flash fire, when he chanced to witness anything of the kind,<sup>1</sup> and heard him administer a rebuke which made the recipient tremble. Like some other gentle natures, when his indignation was roused—and it was only such cases that did fairly rouse it—he was stern indeed. In reading or speaking of any cases of cruelty or oppression, his countenance and voice would change in a most striking manner.—C. C. SOUTHEY ("Life of R. Southey").

*The Ettrick  
Shepherd's  
opinion.*

Before we had been ten minutes together my heart was knit to Southey, and every hour thereafter my esteem for him increased; . . . the weather being fine, we spent the time in rambling on the hills and sailing on the lake; and all the time he manifested a delightful flow of spirits, as well as a kind sincerity of manner, repeating convivial poems and ballads, and always between hands breaking jokes on his nephew, young Coleridge, in whom he seemed to take great delight.—JAMES HOGG ("Reminiscences of Former Days"<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Namely, any act of cruelty.

<sup>2</sup> Hogg (James). Poetical Works. With Autobiography, etc. 5 vols., 16mo. Glasgow, 1838-1840.

A man of more serene and even temper could not be imagined ; nor more uniformly cheerful in his tone of spirits ; nor more unaffectedly polite and courteous in his demeanor to strangers ; . . . In the still "weightier matters of the law," in cases that involved appeals to conscience and high moral principle, I believe Southey to be as exemplary a man as can ever have lived. Were it to his own instant ruin, I am satisfied that he would do justice and fulfil his duty under any possible difficulties, and through the very strongest temptations to do otherwise. For honor the most delicate, for integrity the firmest, and for generosity within the limits of prudence, Southey cannot well have a superior ; and, in the lesser moralities—those which govern the daily habits, and transpire through the manners—he is certainly a better man—that is (with reference to the minor principle concerned), a more *amiable* man—than Wordsworth.—THOMAS DE QUINCEY ("Literary Reminiscences").

*Various  
good  
qualities.*



WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

1775-1864.





## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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WE may well be surprised that Landor lived so long, and that he remained hale and vigorous at an age which few men reach. The vitality must indeed have been great, the frame, like steel—strong and elastic—which could withstand the strain and shock of such wild passions for nearly ninety years. The headlong violence of his temper betrayed him into almost incredible excesses of speech and action, extravagances which stopped but little short of madness. He lived a very stormy life, and he brewed his own tempests. But this was not all. The whirlwinds came often and raged furiously, but they were followed by seasons of beautiful calm and sunshine. This fiery genius could be gentle and playful as a child, tender as a maiden.

One of the most remarkable and suggestive things in Landor's life is his long intimacy with Southey ; a friendship which grew closer and warmer through thirty-five years. There was never the slightest quarrel, or even misunderstanding, between the two men. This is in itself a noteworthy fact, for, first or last, Landor quarrelled with nearly every one whom he knew. The intimacy becomes still more interesting when we consider the points of differ-

ence between the men. Southey was scrupulously methodical in all his ways—everything was done by rule. Landor followed the impulse of the passing hour, wholly regardless of any fixed methods of action. Southey held a high temper under such firm control that it seldom manifested itself. Landor was devoid of self-restraint—a dangerous volcano, likely to be in a state of eruption at any moment. Before they met, the once radical Southey, the disciple of Rousseau, had become a sober conservative, gladly recognizing the claims of authority. Landor, always a revolutionist, wherever he encountered authority, whether social, political, or religious, by a natural impulse contemned and opposed it. Southey lived peacefully in his home at Keswick for forty years. Landor, in the same space of time, was repeatedly forced to change his residence, in consequence of his own misbehavior.<sup>1</sup> Differences, even more striking than these, appear in their various relations to family life, in their conduct as husbands and fathers.

It is true that they had much in common in their scholarship, their literary tastes, and their mutual respect and admiration for each other's work. Yet these bonds of sympathy are not enough to account for such an intimacy, in spite of so many and so radical points of antagonism. The explanation is to be found in what lay deepest in both Southey and Landor; in their cordial generosity; in their high courage; most of all, in their truth, and sincerity of purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> For illustrations of this statement, see p. 280.

John Forster's Biography of Landor is the principal source of information. Unfortunately, this is a peculiarly tiresome and unsatisfactory book, but it is quite indispensable. There are interesting notices of Landor in C. C. Southey's "Life of R. Southey;" in this work, and in the selections from Southey's correspondence, edited by J. W. Warter, many of Landor's letters have been preserved. If only one book is to be consulted, by far the best is the volume in the "English Men of Letters" series, by Professor Sidney Colvin. There is an excellent account of Landor, during his long residence at Bath, written by Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, and published in *Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870. Three articles by Miss Kate Field, entitled "Last Days of Landor," were published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1866. In *Lippincott's Magazine*, April, 1874, there is a valuable article by T. Adolphus Trollope. Charles Dickens published some personal reminiscences in *All the Year Round*, July, 1869; and there is a clever anonymous article in the *Athenæum*, June 5, 1869. The following works also claim attention: Lord Houghton's "Monographs;" James T. Fields's "Old Acquaintance;" the Countess of Blessington's "Idler in Italy;" the "Diary" of Henry Crabb Robinson; and the volume of selections from Landor's writings, edited by Professor Sidney Colvin, and recently published by Macmillan & Co. This volume is worthy of attention as a thoroughly well-made book; it contains a useful and suggestive chronological table, linking the life of Landor with the lives of some of his contemporaries.

## LEADING EVENTS OF LANDOR'S LIFE.

1775. Born, January 30th, in Warwick.
- 1785.—(Aged 10.) At Rugby.
- 1790.—(Aged 15.) Removed from Rugby, to avoid public expulsion for insubordination, and placed with a private tutor.
- 1793.—(Aged 18.) At Oxford University.
- 1794.—(Aged 19.) Rusticated for violent behavior.
- 1795.—(Aged 20.) Publishes his first work, a volume of poems.
- 1798.—(Aged 23.) Publishes "Gebir."
- 1805.—(Aged 30.) His father dies. He succeeds to a large estate, and lives in Bath.
- 1808.—(Aged 33.) Goes to Spain, as a volunteer, to fight against Napoleon. Returns to England.
- 1811.—(Aged 36.) Marries Miss Julia Thuillier, and removes to Llanthony, in Wales.
- 1812.—(Aged 37.) Publishes "Count Julian."
- 1814.—(Aged 39.) His estate in Wales passes into the hands of trustees, and he goes abroad.
- 1815.—(Aged 40.) At Tours with his wife. They remove to Italy.
- 1824.—(Aged 49.) } Publishes three series of "Imaginary Con-
- 1828.—(Aged 53.) } versations." Resides with his family in
- 1829.—(Aged 54.) } Italy.
- 1834.—(Aged 59.) Publishes "The Examination of William Shakespeare."
- 1835.—(Aged 60.) Separates from his wife and children and goes to England.
- 1837.—(Aged 62.) } Resides alone in Bath. Publishes "The
- 1857.—(Aged 82.) } Pentameron of Boccaccio and Petrarca,"
- and "The Last Fruit off an Old Tree."
- Edits his collected works.
- 1858.—(Aged 83.) Forced to leave England, in consequence of a libel suit. Goes to Italy.
- 1863.—(Aged 88.) Publishes "Heroic Idylls."
- 1864.—(Aged 89 years and 7 months.) Dies in Florence, September 17th.

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

WALTER was of strong build, but never, in early or later life, rode well ; and though he took part in cricket, football, and other games, and was even famous for the skill with which he threw the cast-net in fishing, he was at all times disposed rather to walk by the riverside with a book than to engage in such trials of strength and activity. In one of his letters he remarks both of school and college days, that he oftener stuck in the middle of a Greek verse than of a brake ; and he writes on one occasion to Southey, much in the style of an inexpert horseman : "I was very fond of riding when I was young, but I found that it produces a rapidity in the creation of thought which makes us forget what we are doing." His brother Robert tells me that he never followed the hounds at Rugby or anywhere else, and that when he kept three horses he never mounted one of them.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").<sup>1</sup>

*Boyhood.*

"Though followed," writes Mr. Robert Landor, "by two younger brothers as soon as they could be

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<sup>1</sup> Forster (John). Walter Savage Landor : a Biography. 2 vols. London, 1869.

*Gout  
in boyhood.*

received at Rugby, there remains nothing worth recording till he was twelve years old,—when a violent fit of the gout—gout which might have qualified him for an alderman—restored him to his mother's care at Warwick. Never was there a more impatient sufferer ; and his imprecations, divided equally between the gout and his nurses, were heard afar. It is also strange that there never was any return of this disorder. Our father suffered from it, and all three of the younger brothers ; but though Walter's appetite much surpassed the best of ours (or the worst), he escaped it during more than seventy years. However active at dinner, he was always temperate after it ; and I never saw the smallest sign of excess, though he greatly enjoyed three or four glasses of light wine."—ROBERT LANDOR (quoted in Forster's " Life of Landor ").

*Latin and  
Greek  
scholarship  
at Rugby.*

The excellence of his Latin verses was a tradition at Rugby for half a century after he left ; . . . his familiarity with Greek was less conspicuous, that language having become his more especial study only in later years. . . . But what would seem most to have marked itself out as peculiar in his mastery of both Greek and Latin, even so early as his Rugby days, was less what masters could teach him than what Nature herself had given him. This was a character and habit of mind resembling closely that of the ancient writers ; ways of seeing and thinking nearly akin to theirs ; the power, sudden as thought itself, of giving visual shape to objects of thought ; and with all this, intense energy of feeling, and a restless activity of imagination, eager to

reproduce themselves in similar forms of vivid and picturesque expression.—JOHN FORSTER (“Life of Landor”).

He seems to have thought, when in the school,<sup>1</sup> that Doctor James either would not or could not appreciate what he did in Latin verse, and that when he was driven to take special notice of it, he took the worst, and not the best, for the purpose. Thus, when told very graciously on one occasion to copy out fairly in the Play-book verses by himself of which he thought indifferently, Landor in making the copy put private additions to it of several lines, with a coarse allusion beginning, “Hæc sunt malorum pessima carminum quæ Landor unquam scripsit,” etc. This offence was forgiven; but it was followed by another of which the circumstances were such as to render it impossible that he should continue longer in the school. The right at first was on Landor’s side, for Doctor James had strongly insisted on, and the other as firmly had declined, the correction of an alleged false quantity found really not to exist. But, apart from the right or wrong of the dispute, an expression in the course of it rudely used by the pupil, . . . was very sharply resented by the master; and when the matter came to be talked about, only one result was possible. “When between fifteen and sixteen,” writes Mr. Robert Landor, “he was not expelled from Rugby, but removed as the less discreditable punishment, at the head-master’s suggestion. There

*Removal  
from Rugby.*

<sup>1</sup> Rugby.

*Removal  
from Rugby.*

was nothing unusual or discreditable in the particular transgression, but a fierce defiance of all authority, and a refusal to ask forgiveness."—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Two young  
Jacobins.*

Even among those of Landor's own way of thinking in the University, there were many who seem purposely to have kept aloof from him ; not because he was a Jacobin, but because he was a "mad" Jacobin ; though it is not at all clear that the epithet might not have been accepted to mean a more sensible sort of Jacobinism than was popular in the particular quarters from which it proceeded. "At Oxford," said Landor, recalling this time in his old age, "I was about the first student who wore his hair without powder. 'Take care,' said my tutor, 'they will stone you for a republican.' The Whigs (not the Wigs) were then unpopular ; but I stuck to my plain hair and queue tied with black ribbon." . . .

His inspiration doubtless had been the minister Roland's refusal to go to court in either knee-buckles or shoe-buckles ; and under influence of the same example, a youth six months older than Landor was then also waging at Baliol so fierce a war against old ceremonies and usages, that he too had resisted every attempt of the college barber to dress or powder him, and had gone into hall in flowing locks ; yet the remark upon the madness of Landor's Jacobinism was given by this very student of Baliol, a few years later, as his only reason for not having now sought Landor's acquaintance. "Gebir" had then appeared and been placed in the first rank of English



poetry by the same youth, who in the interval had himself published "Joan of Arc;" when, upon the name of the writer of "Gebir" becoming known to him one day, all the Oxford recollection flashed back upon him. "I now remember," Robert Southey wrote to his friend Humphry Davy at Bristol, "who the author of the 'Gebir' is. He was a contemporary of mine at Oxford, of Trinity, and notorious as a mad Jacobin."—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Two young  
Jacobins.*

His tutor was Doctor Sleath, the late prebend of St. Paul's; but though this good man had some influence over him, it was exerted in vain to induce him to compete for a prize poem. "I never would contend at school," he wrote in one of his best letters to Southey, "with any one for anything. I formed the same resolution when I went to college, and I have kept it." With something of the shyness that avoided competition, there was more of the pride that would acknowledge no competitor;<sup>1</sup> and he was, in truth, never well disposed to anything systematized either in pursuits or studies. What he did best and worst, he did in his earliest as in his latest life for the satisfaction of his own will or pleasure.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Dislike for  
competition.*

For a moment I recall the well-remembered figure and face, as they first became known to me nearly

<sup>1</sup> "I strove with none, for none was worth my strife."

Thus Landor wrote upon his seventy-fifth birthday.

*Personal  
appearance.*

thirty years ago. Landor was then upwards of sixty, and looked that age to the full. He was not above the middle stature, but had a stout, stalwart presence, walked without a stoop, and in his general aspect, particularly the set and carriage of his head, was decidedly of what is called a distinguished bearing. His hair was already silvered gray, and had retired far upward from his forehead, which, wide and full but retreating, could never in the earlier time have been seen to such advantage.

What at first was noticeable, however, in the broad white massive head, were the full, yet strangely lifted eyebrows; and they were not immediately attractive. They might have meant only pride or self-will in its most arrogant form but for what was visible in the rest of the face. In the large gray eyes there was a depth of composed expression that even startled by its contrast to the eager restlessness looking out from the surface of them; and in the same variety and quickness of transition, the mouth was extremely striking. The lips that seemed compressed with unalterable will would in a moment relax to a softness more than feminine; and a sweeter smile it was impossible to conceive. What was best in his character, whether for strength or gentleness, had left its traces here.

It was altogether a face on which power was visibly impressed, but without the resolution and purpose that generally accompany it; and one could well imagine that while yet in extreme youth, and before life had written its ineffaceable record, the individual features might have had as little promise as they seem to bear in a portrait of him now before me

belonging to his brother Henry, and taken in his thirtieth year. The age is fine ; but black hair covers all the forehead, and you recognize the face of the later time quite without its fulness, power, and animation. The stubbornness is there, without the softness ; the self-will untamed by any experience ; plenty of energy, but a want of emotion. The nose was never particularly good ; and the lifted brow, flatness of cheek and jaw, wide upper lip, retreating mouth and chin, and heavy neck, peculiarities necessarily prominent in youth, in age contributed only to a certain lion look he liked to be reminded of, and would confirm with a loud, long laugh hardly less than leonine. Higher and higher went peal after peal, in continuous and increasing volleys, until regions of sound were reached very far beyond ordinary human lungs.<sup>1</sup>—JOHN FORSTER (“Life of Landor”).

*Personal  
appearance.*

I met him first in 1847, when he was seventy-three years of age. . . . I was visiting Dr. Brabant in Bath, and we were at Mr. Empson’s “old curiosity” shop, when we saw what seemed a noble-looking old man, badly dressed in shabby snuff-colored clothes, a dirty old blue necktie, unstarched cotton shirt—with a front more like a nightgown than a shirt—and “knubbly” applepie boots. But underneath the rusty old hat-brim gleamed a pair of quiet and penetrating gray-blue eyes ; the voice was sweet and masterly ; the manner that of a man of rare distinction.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser’s Magazine*, July, 1870).

<sup>1</sup> In the last years of his life Landor allowed his beard to grow.

*Peculiarity  
of his  
arms and  
hands.*

His arms were very peculiar. They were rather short, and were curiously restrained and checked in their action at the elbows; in the action of the hands, even when separately clenched, there was the same kind of pause, and a notable tendency to relaxation on the part of the thumb. Let the face be never so intense or fierce, there was a commentary of gentleness in the hands, essential to be taken along with it. . . . In the expression of his hands, though angrily closed, there was always gentleness and tenderness: just as when they were open, and the handsome old gentleman would wave them, with a little courtly flourish that sat well upon him, as he recalled some classic compliment that he had rendered to some reigning beauty; there was a chivalrous grace about them such as pervades his softer verses.—CHARLES DICKENS (*All the Year Round*, July, 1869).

*Conversa-  
tion.*

He had a stately and agreeable presence, and the men-of-letters from different countries who brought introductions to him spoke of his affectionate reception, of his complimentary old-world manners, and of his elegant though simple hospitality. But it was his conversation that left on them the most delightful and permanent impression; so affluent, animated, and colored, so rich in knowledge and illustration, so gay and yet so weighty—such bitter irony and such lofty praise uttered with a voice fibrous in all its tones, whether gentle or fierce—it equalled, if not surpassed, all that has been related of the table-talk of men eminent for social speech. It proceeded from a mind so glad of its own exer-

cise, and so joyous in its own humor, that in its most extravagant notions and most exaggerated attitudes it made argument difficult and criticism superfluous. And when memory and fancy were alike exhausted, there came a laughter so pantomimic, yet so genial, rising out of a momentary silence into peals so cumulative and sonorous, that all contradiction and possible affront were merged forever.—  
LORD HOUGHTON<sup>1</sup> ("Monographs").

*Conversa-  
tion.*

Landor put no curb on his tongue. He never "spoke by the card." He rattled off like a child, saying what came into his head—a very big head—without a care as to the way in which folk would construe his speech; though he flew into rage and riot of expostulation when his hearer represented him as thinking what he had said. A ludicrous example of this rage occurred in Emerson's account of a conversation held with Landor at Fiesole. They talked of art; and Emerson reported that Landor preferred John of Bologna to Michael Angelo. Landor certainly said so; but when he saw his own words in print he roared and bellowed like a bitten cub. The truth was, that on the day of Emerson's visit, he had been quarrelling with an Italian neighbor, who boasted of the great sculptor's name and blood; and those who knew Landor will be sure that under the sway of such passion as he threw into his quarrels he would talk of Michael Angelo as the most pretentious of artists and the most despicable

<sup>1</sup> Milnes (Richard Monckton, Lord Houghton). *Monographs, Personal and Social.* 12mo. London, 1873.

Conversa-  
tion.

of men. Emerson thought the opinion characteristic; what was truly characteristic of Landor was the expression of an opinion which was not his own. The American writer . . . was quaintly puzzled and amused to find that after all his idol denied the force of words which he could not dispute having used.—ANON. (*Athenæum*, June 5, 1869).

In 1842 Daniel Macmillan visited Julius Hare, at Hurstmonceaux. In a letter to a friend (published in Hughes's *Memoir of Macmillan*<sup>1</sup>) he gives the following account of Landor, derived from conversation with Hare :—"He is a noble, warm-hearted man; but quite devoid of anything like philosophical or judicial calmness, and seems to get more and more excitable as his years increase. Nothing delights him more than to pester his visitors, or his host, or any one he meets in company, with all manner of paradoxes. The truly amiable and lovely nature of Tiberius or Nero; or the great folly and cruelty of Pitt and Fox. . . . Sometimes he discourses on the grandeur and beauty and harmony of the modern Greek and Latin prize poems of Oxford and Cambridge; showing them to be in every way superior to all that the Greeks or Romans ever wrote! Or perhaps he spends an hour in proving that Monckton Milnes is the greatest English poet."

Anything like inappropriateness of epithet or inelegance of phrase annoyed him like a personal in-

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes (Thomas). *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*. 12mo. London, 1882.

jury; but above all he was intolerant of slang. . . . But though his language was so perfect, his pronunciation was peculiar in some words. Thus he used to say "woonderful," and "goolden," "woorld," "srimp," "yaller," and "laylock;" and he pronounced the *o* in *won* as in *on*, not *wun* according to the general use.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*Pronunciation.*

He was one of the most determined *h*-murderers that I ever heard speak. He talked always of his 'ouse, his 'orse, and his 'ome. I do not think that he went upon the compensation principle of introducing the unfortunate letter where it ought not to be heard.—T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE (*Lippincott's Magazine*, April, 1874).

*Drops his h's.*

He had a habit, when talking, of standing bolt upright, with his arms close and rather stiffly pendent to his sides, with a stick or ruler, or some such sceptre of authority in his right hand, with which he smartly beat the air in emphasis to his copious, hurried, peremptory utterances, as if drilling his listener to ready and cheerful acquiescence in whatever he was enunciating.—ANON. (*London Reader*, 1864).

*Emphatic manner.*

His repugnance to common relations with mankind showed itself in a peculiar way with respect to the pleasures of the table, in which he took an unreserved enjoyment; his highest luxury was dining alone, and with little light, and he would often resort to Florence for that purpose. He said, "a

*Solitary feasts.*

Table-  
talk.

spider was a gentleman—he eat his fly in secret.” But this dislike to conviviality did not at all prevent him from performing agreeably the duties of host, and the repast was ever seasoned with valuable talk. He liked open discussion, but within decorous limits. “I enjoy no society,” he said, “that makes too free with God or the ladies.”—LORD HOUGHTON (“Monographs”).

Mr. Landor hated talking while he ate—indeed he never would talk himself, and if any one tried to converse with him during the active moments of dinner, he either rebuked them at the time or blazed out against them afterwards—yet in between the courses he would make up little poems about this Malmsey Madeira,<sup>1</sup> and how he was sure that the Greeks had wine exactly like it, and how Epicurus and Anacreon, and Pericles and perhaps Aspasia—who knows?—had drunk it crowned with roses, to the music of the cithara.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

Laughter.

There is so good a description of his laugh in a clever article of the *London Quarterly Review*, shortly after Landor's death, that the reader will thank me for quoting it. The writer is speaking of Landor's morning calls in Bath, with his small Pomeranian dog, as events to the friends he visited. “He used to enounce the most *outré* opinions; and when some sentiment more extravagant than the rest had ex-

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<sup>1</sup> Some very fine Madeira, over ninety years old, which had come to him as an inheritance.



cited the laughter of his audience, he would sit silent until they had finished laughing, then he would begin to shake, then to laugh aloud, *piano* at first, but with *crescendo* steadily advancing to the loudest *fortissimo* ; whereupon Pomero would spring out from his lair, leap into his master's lap, add his bark to Landor's roar, until the mingled volume of sounds would swell from the room into the sleepy streets, and astonish, if not scandalize, the somewhat torpid Bathonians who might be passing by."—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Laughter.*

I used to dread his laugh ! Like his anger, it was sudden, abrupt, exaggerated, uncontrollable. It used to break out at first with some kind of moderation, then grow and grow till it became a deafening roar ; and, like thunder among the mountains, one never knew when the peal was over ; for after a few seconds of quiet, out it came again, worse and louder than ever. When he laughed and Pomero barked—and Pomero always barked whenever he laughed—it was Bedlam in that small room in beautiful Bath.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

Well born as Walter Savage Landor was . . . no title can yet be established for such claim to high consideration or remote antiquity, . . . as from time to time has been put forth in biographical notices of him, and even in his own writings. For here the reflection has to be made,—strange in its application to such a man,—that, possessing few equals in those intellectual qualities which he was also not indisposed to estimate highly enough, he

*Family  
pride.*

*Family  
pride.*

was not less eager to claim a position where many thousands of his contemporaries equalled and many hundreds surpassed him. I had on one occasion the greatest difficulty in restraining him from sending a challenge to Lord John Russell for some fancied slight to the memory of Sir Arnold Savage, Speaker of Henry the Seventh's first House of Commons ; yet any connection beyond the name could not with safety have been assumed.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Political  
views.*

He was a Jacobin,<sup>1</sup> but so would have been if Robespierre and Danton had not been. He reasoned little, but his instincts were all against authority, or what took to him the form of its abuse. With exulting satisfaction he saw the resistance and conquests of democracy ; but pantisocracy, and golden days to come on earth, were not in his hopes or expectation. He rather rejoiced in the prospect of a fierce continued struggle ; his present ideal was that of an armed republic, changing the face of the world ; and as the outbreak of the revolution had not made him republican, neither did its excesses cure him of that malady. He gloried to the last in avowing his preference for a republic ; though he would also date his hatred of the French, which he maintained with almost equal consistency, from the day when they slew their Queen.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

I do not hesitate to say that Landor was no be-

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<sup>1</sup> At Oxford, in 1793.

liever in any of the creeds which are founded on the belief in a written revelation. Were there any possibility of doubt upon the subject, I should not make this statement. But it was not in his nature to conceal any sentiment or opinion, and his own utterances on the subject were of the frankest. I remember to have seen many years ago—a long time before I had ever known him—a long letter from him in which he maintained the superiority of the old classical paganism to any of the forms of faith which have superseded it. In fact, in this respect, as in many others, he was the most antique-minded man I have ever met with.—T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE (*Lippincott's Magazine*, April, 1874).

*Religious convictions.*

His son Arnold had had a fever, and Landor writes to his sister, "Not receiving any letter at Naples, I was almost mad, for I fancied his illness had returned. I hesitated between drowning myself and going post back." Upon which Mr. Forster remarks, "Let no one fancy that this is too extravagant even for Landor. It runs very nearly parallel with a story told always with much enjoyment by his brother Charles of his having lost his road to a friend's house where a party were waiting dinner for him, and startling a country bumpkin by the peremptory demand that he should either at once show him the way or cut his throat on the spot."

*Extravagant expressions.*

At a friendly dinner at Gore House . . . his dress—say, his cravat or shirt-collar—had become slightly disarranged on a hot evening, and Count D'Orsay laughingly called his attention to the cir-

*Extrava-  
gant expres-  
sions.*

cumstance as we rose from table. Landor became flushed and greatly agitated: "My dear Count D'Orsay, I thank you! My dear Count D'Orsay, I thank you from my soul for pointing out to me the abominable condition to which I am reduced! If I had entered the drawing-room, and presented myself before Lady Blessington in so absurd a light, I would have instantly gone home, put a pistol to my head, and blown my brains out!"—CHARLES DICKENS (*All the Year Round*, July, 1869).

*Two char-  
acteristic  
scenes.*

Mr. Landor insisted that I should sit for my picture to his protégé. I consented, upon the express proviso that he, Landor, should always be there at the sittings, so that I might either listen or talk during the penance, and not die of ennui. . . . During one of these sittings the artist happened to speak enthusiastically about some lines of Ben Jonson; whereupon Mr. Landor, who was seated at the time, bounded from his chair, began pacing the room and shaking his tightly clenched hands, as he thundered out:

"Ben Jonson! not another word about him! It makes my blood boil! I haven't patience to hear the fellow's name! A pigmy! an upstart! a presumptuous varlet! WHO DARED to be thought more of than Shakespeare was in his day!"

"Well, but surely," ventured the artist, so soon as he could speak for suppressed laughter, "that was not poor Ben Jonson's fault, but the fault of the indiscriminating generation in which they both lived."

"Not at all!" roared Landor, his eyeballs becom-

ing bloodshot and his nostrils dilating—"not at all! The fellow should have walled himself up in his own brick and mortar before he had connived at and allowed such sacrilege."

"But," said I, for the painter could not speak for laughter, "even if Ben Jonson had been able to achieve such a *tour de force* as this architectural suicide would have been, I am very certain, Mr. Landor, that, taking 'Every Man in his Humor,' Shakespeare would have been the very first to pull down his friend's handiwork and restore him to the world."

"No such thing!" rejoined Mr. Landor, turning fiercely upon me. "Shakespeare never wasted his time; and with his wonderful imagination he'd have known he could have created fifty better."

At another sitting we had an equally ludicrous, because equally vehement, scene, though from a very different cause. I happened to say to the artist, "Come now, Mr. —, although Mrs. Primrose did wish as many jewels in her picture as the limner could throw in for nothing, yet I really must protest against your giving me as much flattery on the same terms. It is all very well for people to call my eyes violet by courtesy; but if they are, they must be the leaves of the violet that is meant. As to tell truth and shame the devil, I'm sorry to say that the said eyes are *tout bonnement* green." This last was no sooner out of my mouth than Mr. Landor was "on his legs"—that is, was shot from his seat as if he had been a twelve-pounder projected from a cannon.

"God bless my soul! green eyes are the most woonderfully beautiful eyes in the whole" (which he

*Two characteristic scenes.*

*Two characteristic scenes.*

pronounced wool) "world. It so happened," he continued, speaking, as was his wont, with such express-train rapidity that every now and then he made a sort of snap at his under lip with his upper teeth, as if to prevent all the words rolling down pell-mell on the floor—"it so happened that when I was a young man at Venice I was standing in the doorway of the Café Florian one day, watching the pigeons on the Piazza San Marco, when an old gentleman rushed up to me and said, 'Pardon me, sir, but will you allow me to look into your eyes? Ah, I thought so! Sir, you have green eyes! I never saw but one pair before, and they belonged to the late Empress Catherine of Russia; they were the most woonderfully beautiful eyes in the world. I have reason," continued Mr. Landor, "to remember this, for while the old gentleman was examining my eyes I had my pocket picked."—LADY BULWER (*Tinsley's Magazine*, 1883).

*The lost dog.*

Once, when I was staying with him, Pomero was missing for a few hours. We had gone out for a walk to Lansdowne Crescent, . . . when we came back Pomero, who had accompanied us for a short time, and had then turned as we supposed to go home, was not to be found. I shall never forget the padrone's mingled rage and despair. He would not eat any dinner, and I remember how that it was a dinner of turbot and stewed hare, which he himself had seasoned and prepared with wine, etc., in the little sitting-room; for he was a good cook in that way and to that extent. And both of these were favorite dishes with him. But he would not

eat, and sat in his high-backed chair, which was not an easy one, or stamped about the room in a state of stormy sorrow, like nothing I had ever seen before, though I saw more than one like tempest afterwards. Now he was sure the dog was murdered, and he should never see him again ; some scoundrel had murdered him out of spite or cruelty, or to make a few pounds by him stuffed, and there was no use in thinking more about him ; then he would go out and scour all Bath for him ; then he would offer rewards—wild rewards—a hundred pounds—his whole fortune—if any one would bring him back alive ; after which he would give way to his grief and indignation again, and, by way of turning the knife in his wound, would detail every circumstance of the dog's being kidnapped, struck, pelted with stones, and tortured in some stable or cellar, and finally killed outright, as if he had been present at the scene. But in a short time, after the whole city had been put into an uproar, and several worthy people made exceedingly unhappy, the little fellow was brought back as pert and vociferous as ever ; and yelped out *mea culpa* on his master's knee, in between the mingled scolding and caressing with which he was received.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*The lost dog.*

Landor had many quarrels with his publishers, and these quarrels were expensive ; for in such cases it was his habit to make a wholesale destruction of whatever manuscripts he might chance to have by him at the time. The following examples of this perverse freak are taken from the volume upon

*Destruction  
of manu-  
scripts.*

*Destruction  
of manu-  
scripts.*

Landor, in the "English Men of Letters" series, by Professor Sidney Colvin,<sup>1</sup> who condenses the cumbersome narrative of Forster with excellent effect :

"During the composition of 'Count Julian' Landor had been in close correspondence with Southey, and had submitted to him the manuscript as it progressed. He had at one moment entertained the . . . idea of getting his tragedy put upon the stage. . . . This abandoned, he offered it to Longmans for publication. They declined to print it either at their own costs, or even, when he proposed that method, at the author's. Whereupon Landor writes to Southey (1811) : 'On receiving the last letter of Mr. Longman I committed to the flames my tragedy of 'Ferranti and Giulio,' with which I intended to surprise you, and am resolved that never verse of mine shall be hereafter committed to anything else. My literary career has been a very curious one. You cannot imagine how I feel relieved at laying down its burden, and abandoning its tissue of humiliations.' . . . The resolution recorded with this composed and irrevocable air lasted no longer than the choler which had provoked it ; and though the play of 'Ferranti and Giulio,' all but a few fragments, had been irretrievably sacrificed, we find 'Count Julian' within a few months offered to and accepted by Mr. Murray, . . . and actually published at the beginning of 1812."

"By the 9th of March, 1822, he had finished fifteen dialogues, and burnt two others which had

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<sup>1</sup> Colvin (Sidney). Landor. 12mo. (English Men of Letters. Edited by J. Morley.) London and New York, 1881.



failed to satisfy him. The manuscript of the fifteen he consigned not many days later by a private hand to Longmans, to whom he at the same time addressed his proposals for their publication. The parcel was delayed in delivery, and no answer reached Landor for more than three months. Long before that his impatience had risen to boiling-point. He rushed headlong to the direst conclusions. Of course the manuscript had been lost ; or of course it had been refused ; or both ; and it was just like his invariable ill-fortune. He was in despair. He took to his bed. He swore he would never write another line, and burnt what he had got by him already written. 'This disappointment has brought back my old bilious complaint, together with the sad reflection on that fatality which has followed me through life, of doing everything in vain. I have, however, had the resolution to tear in pieces all my sketches and projects, and to forswear all future undertakings. I try to sleep away my time, and pass two-thirds of the twenty-four hours in bed.' . . . This was early in June, and it was not until the end of August that news of the manuscript at last arrived. In the meantime Landor had recovered his equanimity, and was busy writing new dialogues and making additions to the old."

"Landor panted for the immediate publication of his new edition,<sup>1</sup> but was again foiled by his own impetuosity. Some want of tact in a letter of Taylor's,<sup>2</sup> some slight delays of payment and correspondence on his part, together with the irritation Lan-

*Destruction  
of manu-  
scripts.*

<sup>1</sup> Of Imaginary Conversations.

<sup>2</sup> His publisher.

*Destruction  
of manu-  
scripts.*

dor had not unnaturally felt under his timorous censorship, led to an outbreak which made all future relations between them impossible. Landor . . . presently exploded, writing to accuse Taylor of every kind of misconduct, and proclaiming every kind of desperate resolution in consequence : ' His first villany instigated me to throw my fourth volume, in its imperfect state, into the fire, and has cost me nine-tenths of my fame as a writer. His next villany will entail perhaps a chancery suit on my children—for at its commencement I blow my brains out. This cures me forever, if I live, of writing what could be published ; and I will take good care that my son shall not suffer in the same way. Not a line of any kind will I leave behind me. My children shall be carefully warned against literature.' <sup>1</sup> Was ever ancient Roman so forgetful of himself ? Was ever overgrown schoolboy so incorrigible ? . . . The materials intended for his fourth volume he had, as we have just read, destroyed. But within a few months more he had produced new dialogues enough not only for one, but for two additional volumes, and in the meantime another publisher had been found in the person of Colburn."

"The delay which ensued in the issue of a new edition of his 'Hellenics' (1859), prepared partly before he left England and partly at Fiesole, exasperated him much as similar delays had exasperated him of old, and led, as of old, to the burning, in a moment of irritation, of a quantity of literary materials that lay by him."

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<sup>1</sup> Written to Southey, in 1825.

The Prince of Carpi said of Erasmus he was so thin-skinned that a fly would draw blood from him. The author of the "Imaginary Conversations" had the same infirmity. A very little thing would disturb him for hours, and his friends were never sure of his equanimity. I was present once when a blundering friend trod unwittingly on his favorite prejudice, and Landor went off instantler like a blaspheming torpedo.<sup>1</sup> There were three things in the world which received no quarter at his hands, and when in the slightest degree he scented *hypocrisy*, *pharisaism*, or *tyranny*, straitway he became furious, and laid about him like a mad giant.

Procter told me that when Landor got into a passion, his rage was sometimes uncontrollable. The fiery spirit knew his weakness, but his anger quite overmastered him in spite of himself. "Keep your temper, Landor," somebody said to him one day when he was raging. "That is just what I don't wish to keep," he cried; "I wish to be rid of such an infamous, ungovernable thing. I don't wish to keep my temper." Whoever wishes to get a good look at Landor will not seek for it alone in John Forster's interesting life of the old man, admirable as it is, but will turn to Dickens's "Bleak House" for side glances at the great author. In that vivid story Dickens has made his friend Landor stand for the portrait of Lawrence Boythorn. The very laugh which made the whole house vibrate, the roundness

*Violent  
temper.*

*The original  
of  
"Lawrence  
Boythorn."*

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Fields tells, in "Old Acquaintance," of Leigh Hunt's having said of Landor's oaths, "They are so rich, they are really nutritious."

*The original of  
"Lawrence  
Boythorn."*

and fulness of voice, the fury of superlatives, are all given in Dickens's best manner, and no one who has ever seen Landor for half an hour could possibly mistake Boythorn for anybody else. Talking the matter over once with Dickens, he said, "Landor always took that presentation of himself in hearty good humor, and seemed rather proud of the picture."—JAMES T. FIELDS ("Old Acquaintance").

*The volcano  
in a state of  
eruption.*

A lady visiting Miss James, one of his oldest and dearest friends at Bath, called on him one day. She had just been reading a letter of his in the *Examiner*, and by way of opening the conversation agreeably, she said that he "wrote for the papers." Landor replied hastily, "I do not, madam." He took her to mean literary work as a paid press man; a thing of which he had a haughty horror. The lady, not understanding his eyes, and not seeing where he had mistaken her, repeated her assertion, in all good humor but a little dogmatically; "Oh yes you do," she said, "I have just read something of yours." She had applied the match. Landor broke out into one of his most violent fits of fury; swore she had insulted him and given him the lie direct; and behaved so outrageously that she and her friend were obliged in self-respect to beat a hasty retreat before his overpowering wrath.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*Impossibility of check-  
ing him.*

When his passion, or madness rather, was on him it was useless to try and reason with him. He was mad, and you might as well have tried to stop the course of a tempest as to control him. But give

him time—let the fit die out—and then he would take things quietly, and perhaps laugh at himself for his fury.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*Impossibility of checking him.*

Believing here, as at every quarrel in which he had ever been engaged, that he saw on one side a fiend incarnate and on the other an angel of light,<sup>1</sup> he permitted that astounding credulity to work his irascibility into madness; and there was then as much good to be got by reasoning with him as by arguing with a storm off Cape Horn. It was vain to point out to him that he had nothing himself to gain from so sordid a dispute; that what he had lost was gone irrecoverably; and that there was no such mighty difference between the cause he championed and that which he assailed, to justify or call for interference. Why should I once more repeat what this narrative has told so often? He rejected every warning, rushed into print, and found himself enmeshed in an action for libel.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Running amuck.*

The old vivacity of temperament, and irascibility, never taking malignant forms, but very often ludicrous ones, remained to the last. I remember a terrible scene of consternation in the little house in the Via della Chiesa. Landor had had his dinner, and having finished had rung for the maid who waited on him to take away the dinner things. He

*Untamed in old age.*

<sup>1</sup> The particulars of this affair are much too long for quotation. It was a quarrel over money, between two women.

*Untamed in  
old age.*

had taught the good people of the house that it was expedient that that which they did for him should be done quickly ; but on this unfortunate occasion the girl did not answer his summons as immediately as his impatience thought she ought to have done ; and when he had waited for her appearance as long as he thought the most angelic patience could be expected to wait—*i.e.*, about two minutes—he bustled up from his chair, and gathering together the four corners of the table-cloth, flung it, together with all that had been on it, but was now *in* it, out of the window into the street ! . . . And this was the vivacity of an old gentleman considerably past eighty !—T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE (*Lippincott's Magazine*, April, 1874).

*Involun-  
tary  
changes of  
residence.*

Landor was seldom permitted to stay anywhere as long as he wanted to. Most of his removals were a matter of stern necessity. He made a place too hot to hold him, and he was ordered to “move on.” The following summary of his enforced changes of residence is offered as a further illustration of the violence of his temper. In 1790 he was removed from Rugby, at the instance of the masters, for insubordination. He was expelled from Oxford in 1794, the cause, violence and defiance of authority ; upon going home he disagreed with his father, and went to London. Law-suits, the result, for the most part, of his own conduct, forced him to leave his Welsh home, in 1814, and it became necessary for him to live abroad. So he sailed to Jersey, where he was followed by his wife, with whom he quarrelled, and from whom he parted, leaving her be-

hind him, while he went on to Tours. Here he was joined by his wife after a few months, they forgave each other, and went together to Como in 1815. In 1818 he was compelled to leave Como, because he had threatened to thrash a magistrate, whom he accused of ill treating him in a libel suit. He was ordered to leave Florence, for a somewhat similar cause, in 1829. He quarrelled with his wife in 1835, left her and his children in Italy, and went to England. After about two years of unsettled life in various places, he established himself in Bath, in 1837; and here he lived alone until 1858, when he was again exiled from England, this time in consequence of a libel suit, and returned to Italy in his 84th year.

*Involuntary  
changes of  
residence.*

At school, at home, at college, conscious always of powers that doubtless received but scant acknowledgment, he contracted such a habit of looking down upon everybody that he lost altogether the power, which the very wisest may least afford to lose, of occasionally looking down upon himself. Everything was to begin or to be altered anew for him, he was to be more sagacious than his elders, . . . indulge unchecked whatever humors pleased him, and glorying that he was not cast in the mould of other men's opinions, find nothing that it became him to object to in his own, provided only they were sufficiently wild, irregular, singular, and extreme. The contradictions in such a character as this, its generous as well as its selfish points, its comic and its tragic incidents, are necessarily marked with more prominence than in the ordinary run of men; and almost everything will depend upon the side

*His radical  
fault.*

you approach it from.—JOHN FORSTER (“Life of Landor”).

*Various  
traits.*

The extravagant opinion of his own pre-eminence was formed early in life, and remained with him in old age. Often as he changed his estimates of contemporaries, according as they rose or fell in his personal regard, this estimate never changed. He looked upon himself as superior to everybody else, and was angry with titles because they disputed his higher title. He was an enthusiastic friend; and as far as sound, violence, and unmeasured denunciation went, a bitter hater; but beyond unsparing vituperation, he would not have injured an enemy. He would certainly not have lent a hand to crush him. It was the strong whom he always rushed to attack. With all the violence of his dislikes and likings, he had also the softness and tenderness of the poetic temperament. He was passionately fond of young children. He was generous to profusion whenever he had the means. He had a warm feeling for all men of literature, and would have nurtured genius in whatever obscure nook found lurking. Self-satisfied under all circumstances, he was without personal ambition or the desire of aggrandizement.<sup>1</sup> His own conception of himself was too

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<sup>1</sup> The words “self-satisfied under all circumstances” must be taken with considerable allowance. In his letters Landor sometimes expressed the strongest dissatisfaction with himself; as for instance when he writes to Southey,—“My evil genius drags me through existence against the current of my best inclinations. . . . I never have been happy but in consequence of some weakness or some vice.”



elevated to permit of his descending to ordinary meannesses. He neither desired money beyond what the necessities of the hour demanded, nor rank, nor influence. The men he admired were men of genius and talent, not men of station. He neither observed nor cared whether they came in carriages or afoot. . . . He noticed a man's appearance as little as he studied his own.—EDWARD WILSON LANDOR (Quoted in Forster's "Life of Landor").

*Various  
traits.*

John Forster quotes Robert Landor as follows:—"I doubt whether among all your acquaintances," wrote Mr. Robert Landor to me, "you have ever known any two men more unlike each other than my brother as he appeared when paying his customary visits to you or Mr. Kenyon, so joyous, so benevolent then, and as he proved to be in his father's house while young, or in his own when twenty years older. Where there was no disrespect, but only a difference of opinion on some subject of no consequence whatever, I once heard him tell an old lady (my father's guest, but in my father's absence) that she was a damned fool. If you ask why such an anecdote should be related by me, I must reply that there may be living many persons, beyond his own family, who still remember such, and would contradict any narrative of yours in which the best qualities were remembered, the worst forgotten."

*Two  
Landors.*

The high breeding, and urbanity of his manners, which are very striking, I had not been taught to expect. . . . His avoidance of general society, though courted to enter it, his dignified reserve

*Courtesy:—  
Gallantry.*

Courtesy:—  
Gallantry.

when brought in contact with those he disapproves, and his fearless courage in following the dictates of a lofty mind, had somehow or other given the erroneous impression that his manners were, if not somewhat abrupt, at least singular. This is not the case, or, if it be, the only singularity I can discern is a more than ordinary politeness towards women. . . . The politeness of Landor has nothing of the troublesome officiousness of a *petit-maitre*, nor the oppressive ceremoniousness of a fine gentleman of *l'ancien Régime*; it is grave and respectful, without his ever losing sight of what is due to himself, when most assiduously practising the urbanity due to others. There is a natural dignity which appertains to him that suits perfectly with the style of his conversation and his general appearance.—  
COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON (“Idler in Italy”).

R. R. Madden, in his “Life of the Countess of Blessington,”<sup>1</sup> says, “Lady Blessington thus speaks in one of her letters of her first meeting with Walter Savage Landor in May, 1825, at Florence:

‘I had learned from his works to form a high opinion of the man as well as the author. But I was not prepared to find in him the courtly, polished gentleman of high breeding, of manners, deportment, and demeanor that one might expect to meet with in one who had passed the greater portion of his life in courts.’”

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<sup>1</sup> Madden (R. R.). Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington. 3 vols., 8vo. London, 1855.

With all his fury and passion and pride, and his thousand other faults, his manners to ladies—unless they offended him—were singularly respectful and courteous. Up to quite the last years of his English life, he used to take them down to the street door, and stand bare-headed while he handed them into the carriage ; and no one was more severe than he on the lounging slipshod manners of the present day, which he said every woman should resent as a personal affront to herself.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*Courtesy:—  
Gallantry.*

He used to read his own poems to me : and how he read ! There was nothing like that deep, rich, musical voice of his. It was indeed like the noblest music. And when he came to the more touching passages—not necessarily pathetic, but rather stirring and searching—there was just that small inartificial quiver in his voice, which struck to one's own heart more than the most perfect bit of taught elocution in the world.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*Reading  
aloud.*

When he bought anything that he thought would please me, he used to have a standing joke about being ruined. "It has cost quite a sum !" he used always to say. "I shall be entirely ruined after this !" How well I remember the sweet smile—who that knew him does not remember that sweet, almost plaintive smile of his !—with which he used to make his little speech, "It has cost quite a sum !" —bringing his lips together on the last word.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*Pleasantry.*

*Absent-  
minded-  
ness.*

(Hazlitt, upon the occasion of his visit to Landor, came in a decidedly unconventional dress); . . .  
“but his host,” Mr. Wilson Landor adds, “would not know whether he was dressed in black or white. He wore his own clothes, like Dominie Sampson, until they would hardly hold together; and when he visited his sisters at Warwick they used to resort to the expedient practised upon the dominie, and leave new garments for him at his bedside, which he would put on without discovering the change.”

In that there is overcoloring, but the frequent absence of mind could not be exaggerated; and I remember one such amusing instance of forgetfulness which perhaps originated the story, since it certainly led to the necessity at Warwick of supplying him with other clothes than his own. He had been so much put out at one of his visits by having left the key of his portmanteau behind him, that his sister was hardly surprised to see him, when next he appeared at her house, eagerly flourishing in his hand an uplifted key, at once knowing this to be his comforting assurance to her that any possible repetition of the former trouble had been guarded against. Storms of laughter followed from him as she expressed her satisfaction; and the last of his successive peals had scarcely subsided, when, inquiry being made for his portmanteau, the fatal discovery presented itself that to bring only a key was more of a disaster than to bring only a portmanteau.

“He was so frequently absorbed in his own reflections,” continues his relative, “as to be unconscious of external objects, which indeed seldom much af-

fectured him. He would walk about Bath, as between Florence and Fiesole, with his eyes fixed on the ground, taking no heed of the world around him. I have known him to travel from London into Denbighshire and be quite unable to say by which route he had travelled, what towns he had passed by, or whether or not he had come through Birmingham." My own experience also confirms this.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Absent-mindedness.*

His actions were always eager, half tremulous, and I must confess clumsy. He had no mechanical power, and no perception of small things. He was always losing and overlooking, and then the tumult that would arise was something too absurd, considering the occasion. He used to stick a letter into a book : then, when he wanted to answer it, it was gone—and some one had taken it—the only letter he wanted to answer—that he would rather have forfeited a thousand pounds than have lost, and so on. Or he used to push his spectacles over his forehead, and then declare they were lost, lost forever. He would ramp and rave about the room at such times as these, upsetting everything that came in his way, declaring that he was the most unfortunate man in the world, or the greatest fool, or the most inhumanly persecuted. I would persuade him to sit down and let me look for the lost property ; when he would sigh in deep despair, and say there was no use in taking any more trouble about it, it was gone forever. When I found it, as of course I always did, he would say 'thank you,' as quietly and naturally as if he had not been raving like a maniac half a

*Clumsiness : storm and calm.*

minute before.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Frazer's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*Forgetfulness.*

Upon *Blackwood* making some objections to his "Pericles and Aspasia," he had sent back to his publishers . . . every shilling paid for the copy-right ; yet, only three years after a proceeding so remarkable, he had forgotten, not merely that anything had ever been paid him for the book, but, more marvellous still, that he had himself sent the money back. "I published 'Pericles and Aspasia' on my own account," he reiterated ; and was sending further remittances in satisfaction of the supposed loss, when I stopped him by a statement from Mr. Saunders (the publisher) himself.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Work.*

Whether in town or country he reflected and composed habitually out walking, and therefore preferred at all times to walk alone. "There were half-hours," he represents himself as saying to Southey, "when, although in good humor and good spirits, we would on no consideration be disturbed by the necessity of talking. In this interval there is neither storm nor sunshine of the mind, but calm and (as the farmers call it) *growing* weather, in which the blades of thought spring up and dilate insensibly. Whatever I do I must do in the open air, or in the silence of night ; either is sufficient ; but I prefer the hours of exercise, or, what is next to exercise, of field repose."—SIDNEY COLVIN ("English Men of Letters").

He was always writing. He used to seem to be dozing, or looking out on vacancy lost in thought, when suddenly he would start up, seize a pen—one of the many blackened, scrubby, stumpy old swan quills that lay about the room—and write rapidly in his only half-legible hand, throwing his paper into the ashes to dry.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*Work.*

He said "There are two men, Hogarth and Landseer, who affect my heart the most deeply of all painters, and Raffaele alone can detain me so long a time before him." Of music he was also passionately fond; and though he gave away, from time to time, almost every book possessed by himself, he had extraordinary enjoyment in wandering up and down a library belonging to a friend.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Pictures—  
Music—  
Books.*

Landor had by this time (1833) become known, not wisely but too well, among the Italian picture-dealers, who passed through his hands as many rare old masters as would have set up the fortunes of half the galleries in Europe. In this as in too many other things he had no other judgment than his will; and a cheerful self-imposture enabled him in perfect good faith to carry on the imposture honestly with all, even the rascals who made it their commodity. He would so prepare you by a letter for his Rubens or Raffaele, or in its presence would do it homage with such perfect good faith, that your own eyes were as ready as his to be made fools to the other senses. . . . Often have enjoyments

*"Old Masters."*

*"Old Masters."*

in this way been mine which the presence of the real masters could not have made addition to ; and never had I reason to question his own belief that the canvas did actually contain the glories that were but reflected on it from imagination and desire.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Love of trees.*

Nothing was such pleasure to him always as to have the country in some form near, in shape of trees, plants, or flowers ; and, through three successive changes of lodging during his first thirteen years in Bath, he clung to the square in which he first lived mainly because of a plane-tree and a mountain ash in the garden of which he was extremely fond. When an accident happened to one of his sister's cedars he grieved as he would have done for some friend of his youth. "You tell me," he wrote to her, "it is broken into splinters. Surely about the root there must be some pieces large enough to make a little box of. Pray keep them for me. Here is a man at Bath who will contrive to form them into something which I may keep in my bed-room." His sister had anticipated the wish : a writing-case of cedar, already put in hand for him, reached him on his next birthday ; and I was witness to the delight with which he received it. He was seventy that day, and had risen at his usual hour of nine, though he had stayed at the subscription ball the previous night till close upon the third hour of the morning.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

My personal knowledge extended only to Landor's later life ; and recollections derived exclusively



from himself I found to be too often incompatible with the statements of others to be used with perfect safety. Not that Landor would at any time consciously have practised deception. The absence of it in his nature in regard to such learning as he possessed, . . . extended to every part of his life. Never was any man so little of a hypocrite ; for it was not until he had grossly deceived himself, that any one was in danger of being deceived by him upon any subject whatever. But, with an imagination to the very last incessantly and actively busy, it was not difficult that by himself he should be so misled ; that he should not at all times be able to distinguish between the amusement of his fancy and the certainty of his recollection ; and that, without charging him even with carelessness as to truth, his facts would occasionally prove to have been hardly less imaginary than his conversations.—JOHN FORSTER (“Life of Landor”).

*Veracity.*

Few of his infirmities are without something kindly or generous about them ; and we are not long in discovering there is nothing so wildly incredible that he will not himself in perfect good faith believe. When he published his first book of poems on quitting Oxford, the profits were to be reserved for a distressed clergyman. When he published his Latin poems, the poor of Leipzig were to have the sum they realized. When his comedy was ready to be acted, a Spaniard who had sheltered him at Castro was to be made richer by it. When he competed for the prize of the Academy of Stockholm, it was to go to the poor of Sweden. If no-

*Phases of  
generosity.*

*Phases of  
generosity.*

body got anything from any of these enterprises, the fault at all events was not his. With his extraordinary power of forgetting disappointments, he was as prepared at each successive failure to start afresh as if each had been a triumph. . . . He was ready at all times to set aside out of his own possessions something for somebody who might please him for the time ; and when frailties of temper and tongue are noted, this other eccentricity should not be omitted. He desired eagerly the love as well as the good opinion of those whom for the time he esteemed, and no one was more affectionate while under such influences. It is not a small virtue to feel such genuine pleasure as he always did in giving and receiving pleasure, for one half cannot be selfish. His generosity, too, was bestowed chiefly on those who could make small acknowledgment in thanks and no return in kind.—JOHN FORSTER (“Life of Landor”).

*Kindness to  
Southey.*

Landor and Southey became acquainted in 1808, and at their first meeting Landor gave a signal instance of his large-hearted generosity. Southey tells the story in a letter to his friend Bedford :—“He talked of *Thalaba*, and I told him of the series of mythological poems which I had planned ; mentioned some of the leading incidents on which they were to have been formed, and also told him for what reason they were laid aside ;—in plain English, that I could not afford to write them. Landor’s reply was, ‘Go on with them, and I will pay for printing them, as many as you will write, and as many copies as you please.’ . . . It is some-

thing to be praised by one's peers ; ordinary praise I value as little as ordinary abuse."

It had become very difficult now to persuade him to leave Bath. He was readier than formerly with excuses for not visiting us. His excuses were sometimes the reverse of complimentary, as when he explained (1853) his disinclination to come to the great city, because there if he saw three men he might be pretty sure that a couple of them were scoundrels, while out of the same number in the country it might be doubted if the villanous proportion would be more than one. The following year he gave a more touching reason, somewhat nearer the truth. "I too often think at night of what I had been seeing in the morning, poor mothers, half-starved children, and girls habitually called unfortunate by people who drop the word as lightly as if it had no meaning in it. Little do they think that they are speaking of the fallen angels ; the real ones, not the angels of mythology and fable. So many heart-aches always leave me one."—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Reasons for  
avoiding  
London.*

*August 16th, 1830.* Met to-day the one man in Florence whom I was anxious to know. This was Walter Savage Landor, a man of unquestionable genius, but very questionable good sense. . . . He was a man of florid complexion, with large full eyes, and altogether a *leonine* man, and with a fierceness of tone well-suited to his name ; his decisions being confident, and on all subjects, whether of taste or of life, unqualified ; each standing for itself, not

*A general  
view.*

*A general  
view.*

caring whether it was in harmony with what had gone before or would follow from the same oracular lips. . . . The combination of superficial ferocity and inherent tenderness, so admirably portrayed in "Bleak House," still at first strikes every stranger—for twenty-two years have not materially changed him—no less than his perfect frankness and reckless indifference to what he says. . . . Though he meant to live and die in Italy, he had a very bad opinion of the Italians. He would rather follow his daughter to the grave than to the church with an Italian husband. . . . The Italians said, "Every one is afraid of him." Yet he was respected universally. He had credit for generosity as well as honesty; and he deserved it, provided an ample allowance was made for caprice. He was conscious of his own infirmity of temper, and told me he saw few persons, because he could not bear contradiction. Certainly, I frequently did contradict him; yet his attentions to me, both this and the following year, were unwearied.—HENRY CRABB ROBINSON ("Diary").

*Tributes  
from  
Southey.*

In 1809 Southey, having then known Landor for about a year, wrote to John Rickman, "You will see one of the most extraordinary men that it has ever been my fortune to fall in with, and one who would be one of the greatest, if it were possible to tame him. He does more than any of the gods of all my mythologies, for his very words are thunder and lightning,—such is the power and the splendor with which they burst out: but all is perfectly natural; there is no trick about him,—no preaching,

no parade, no playing off." After an intimacy of twenty years, Southey wrote to another friend, in 1829, "Never did man represent himself in his writings so much less generous, less just, less compassionate, less noble in all respects than he really is. I certainly never knew any one of brighter genius or of kinder heart."

*Tributes  
from  
Southey.*

If not uniformly placable, Landor was always compassionate. He was tender-hearted rather than bloody-minded at all times. . . . In fact there is not a more marked peculiarity in his genius than the union with its strength of a most uncommon gentleness, and in the personal ways of the man this was equally manifest. When . . . Leigh Hunt went to Italy and saw him, he endeavored to convey the impression produced by so much vehemence of nature joined to such extraordinary delicacy of imagination by likening him to a stormy mountain pine that should produce lilies.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*Fierce, yet  
gentle.*

Landor had genius, courage, nobleness ; each on a grand scale, and of the highest kind. The faults which every eye could see in him were balanced by splendid merits, though these were often of the sort to which common eyes are blind. A nature prodigal and generous, and temper warm, confiding and unselfish, could not be denied him ; and men of any subtlety of insight could not fail to see that his vices were but virtues gone astray. . . . Nor is it clear that Landor's rush of leonine wrath was anything more than a frenzy used for the sake of art.

*A kindly  
view of his  
explosions.*

*A kindly  
view of his  
explosions.*

The exaggeration is often so gross as to have the effect of high comedy; and we are constantly tickled by the thought that much of what makes us laugh was merely meant for sport. In no other way can we explain the hectoring tone, the lordly air, and the boastful words so frequently assumed. If Landor could be taken as meaning what he said, he would be regarded as the greatest bully and ruffian that ever lived. Such is not the way in which Lawrence Boythorn—openly meant for Savage Landor—is shown to the reader of “Bleak House.” That explosive gentleman is a comic character, with a certain consciousness of his amusing side. When Boythorn bellows—“We have been misdirected, Jarndyce, by a most abandoned ruffian, who told us to take the turning to the right instead of to the left. He is the most intolerable scoundrel on the face of the earth. . . . I could have that fellow shot without the least remorse”—we all begin to laugh. Now these were Landor’s phrases. When the smallest pebble broke the flow of his discourse, he would dash off into such grotesque denunciation as to defy anybody to keep his face. “That fellow,” he one day roared to the writer of these lines, . . . “was the greatest rascal that ever lived, and his father before him was, next to him, the greatest rascal that ever lived.” He owed the man no grudge, and his exceeding violence was but a form of his tempestuous humor.—ANON. (*Athenæum*, June 5, 1869).

“Landor has to-day,” Mr. Browning wrote to me at the close of August (1859), “completed a three weeks’ stay with the Storys. They declare most em-

phatically that a more considerate, gentle, easily satisfied guest never entered their house. They declare his visit has been an unalloyed delight to them ; and this, quite as much from his gentlemanliness and simple habits, and evident readiness to be pleased with the least attention, as from his conversation, which would be attractive under any circumstances. An intelligent friend also, on a visit to them, bears witness to the same effect. They perceive indeed, though not affecting themselves, inequalities of temper in him ; but they all agree that he may be managed with the greatest ease by 'civility' alone." Such always was Landor, when he would consent to submit himself to friendly influences.—JOHN FORSTER ("Life of Landor").

*A visit to  
the Storys.*

His faults, though great and heavy, were more superficial than were his virtues, . . . they were more matters of temperament than of soul. He was assuredly not fit for a calm and peaceful domestic life in the ordinary sense ; and yet I assert it again and again, he was by no means so intractable and impossible as he has been represented. He was difficult ; but how many men are easy to get on with ? Not one in a thousand ! men too with no relief to their ill-temper, men as arbitrary, as inconsiderate, as selfish, as vain, as he has been painted, and without his tenderness, without his poetry, his intellect, his humour. I stayed with him long and often, and I never had one moment's coolness with him ; never the faintest shadow of misunderstanding or displeasure.—MRS. E. LYNN LINTON (*Fraser's Magazine*, July, 1870).

*His virtues  
greater  
than his  
faults.*



*"Lawrence  
Boythorn."*

One morning at breakfast Mr. Jarndyce received a letter, and looking at the superscription said, "From Boythorn? Aye, aye!" and opened and read it with evident pleasure, announcing to us, in a parenthesis, when he was about half-way through, that Boythorn was "coming down" on a visit. Now, who was Boythorn? we all thought. . . .

"I went to school with this fellow, Lawrence Boythorn," said Mr. Jarndyce, tapping the letter as he laid it on the table, "more than five-and-forty years ago. He was then the most impetuous boy in the world, and he is now the most impetuous man. He was then the loudest boy in the world, and he is now the loudest man. He was then the heartiest and sturdiest boy in the world, and he is now the heartiest and sturdiest man. He is a tremendous fellow."

"In stature, sir?" asked Richard.

"Pretty well, Rick, in that respect," said Mr. Jarndyce; "being some ten years older than I, and a couple of inches taller, with his head thrown back like an old soldier; his stalwart chest squared, his hands like a clean blacksmith's, and his lungs!—there's no simile for his lungs. Talking, laughing, or snoring, they make the beams of the house shake. . . . But it's the inside of the man, the warm heart of the man, the passion of the man, the fresh blood of the man . . . that I speak of. . . . His language is as sounding as his voice. He is always in extremes; perpetually in the superlative degree. In his condemnation he is all ferocity. You might suppose him to be an Ogre, from what he says; and I believe he has the reputation of one



from some people. There ! I tell you no more of him beforehand. You must not be surprised to see him take me under his protection ; for he has never forgotten that I was a low boy at school, and that our friendship began in his knocking two of my head tyrant's teeth out (he says six) before breakfast. Boythorn and his man," to me, "will be here this afternoon, my dear."

*"Lawrence  
Boythorn."*

I took care that the necessary preparations were made for Mr. Boythorn's reception, and we looked forward to his arrival with some curiosity. The afternoon wore away, however, and he did not appear. The dinner-hour arrived, and still he did not appear. The dinner was put back an hour, and we were sitting round the fire with no light but the blaze, when the hall-door suddenly burst open, and the hall resounded with these words, uttered with the greatest vehemence and in a stentorian tone.

"We have been misdirected, Jarndyce, by a most abandoned ruffian, who told us to take the turning to the right instead of to the left. He is the most intolerable scoundrel on the face of the earth. His father must have been a most consummate villain, ever to have had such a son. I would have that fellow shot without the least remorse."

"Did he do it on purpose?" Mr. Jarndyce inquired.

"I have not the slightest doubt that the scoundrel has passed his whole existence is misdirecting travellers!" returned the other. "By my soul, I thought him the worst-looking dog I had ever beheld, when he was telling me to take the turning to the right. And yet I stood before that fellow face to face, and didn't knock his brains out!"

*"Lawrence  
Boythorn,"*

"Teeth, you mean?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Lawrence Boythorn, really making the whole house vibrate. "What, you have not forgotten it yet! Ha, ha, ha!—And that was another most consummate vagabond. By my soul, the countenance of that fellow, when he was a boy, was the blackest image of perfidy, cowardice, and cruelty ever set up as a scarecrow in a field of scoundrels. If I were to meet that unparalleled despot in the streets to-morrow, I would fell him like a rotten tree!"

"I have no doubt of it," said Mr. Jarndyce. "Now, will you come up-stairs?"

"By my soul, Jarndyce," returned his guest, who seemed to refer to his watch, "if you had been married, I would have turned back at the garden gate, and gone away to the remotest summits of the Himalaya Mountains, sooner than I would have presented myself at this unseasonable hour."

"Not quite so far, I hope?" said Mr. Jarndyce.

"By my life and honor, yes!" cried the visitor. "I wouldn't be guilty of the audacious insolence of keeping a lady of the house waiting all this time, for any earthly consideration. I would infinitely rather destroy myself—infinately rather!"

Talking thus, they went up-stairs; and presently we heard him in his bedroom thundering "Ha, ha, ha!" and again "Ha, ha, ha!" until the flattest echo in the neighborhood seemed to catch the contagion, and to laugh as enjoyingly as he did, or as we did when we heard him laugh.

We all conceived a prepossession in his favor; for there was a sterling quality in this laugh, and in

his vigorous healthy voice, and in the roundness and fulness with which he uttered every word he spoke, and in the very fury of his superlatives, which seemed to go off like blank cannons and hurt nothing. But we were hardly prepared to have it so confirmed by his appearance, when Mr. Jarndyce presented him. He was not only a very handsome old gentleman—upright and stalwart as he had been described to us—with a massive grey head, a fine composure of face when silent, a figure that might have become corpulent but for his being so continually in earnest that he gave it no rest, and a chin that might have subsided into a double chin but for the vehement emphasis in which it was constantly required to assist; but he was such a true gentleman in his manner, so chivalrously polite, his face was lighted by a smile of so much sweetness and tenderness, and it seemed so plain that he had nothing to hide, but showed himself exactly as he was—incapable . . . of anything on a limited scale, and firing away with those blank great guns, because he carried no small arms whatever—that really I could not help looking at him with equal pleasure as he sat at dinner, whether he smilingly conversed with Ada and me, or was led by Mr. Jarndyce into some great volley of superlatives, or threw up his head like a blood-hound, and gave out that tremendous Ha, ha, ha!

“You have brought your bird with you, I suppose?” said Mr. Jarndyce.

“By Heaven, he is the most astonishing bird in Europe!” replied the other. “He *is* the most wonderful creature! I wouldn’t take ten thousand

“*Laurence  
Beythorn.*”

"Lawrence  
Boythorn."

pounds for that bird. I have left an annuity for his sole support, in case he should outlive me. He is, in sense and attachment, a phenomenon. And his father before him was one of the most astonishing birds that ever lived!"

The subject of this laudation was a very little canary, who was so tame that he was brought down by Mr. Boythorn's man, on his forefinger, and, after taking a gentle flight around the room, alighted on his master's head. To hear Mr. Boythorn presently expressing the most implacable and passionate sentiments, with this fragile mite of a creature quietly perched on his forehead, was to have a good illustration of his character, I thought.

"By my soul, Jarndyce," he said, very gently holding up a bit of bread to the canary to peck at, "if I were in your place, I would seize every Master in Chancery by the throat to-morrow morning, and shake him until his money rolled out of his pockets, and his bones rattled in his skin. I would have a settlement out of somebody, by fair means or by foul. If you would empower me to do it, I would do it for you with the greatest satisfaction!" (All this time the very small canary was eating out of his hand.)

"I thank you, Lawrence, but the suit is hardly at such a point at present," returned Mr. Jarndyce, laughing, "that it would be greatly advanced, even by the legal process of shaking the Bench and the whole Bar."

"There never was such an infernal cauldron as that Chancery, on the face of the earth!" said Mr. Boythorn. "Nothing but a mine below it on a busy

day in term time, with all its records, rules, and precedents collected in it, and every functionary belonging to it also, high and low, upward and downward, from its son the Accountant-General to its father the Devil, and the whole blown to atoms with ten thousand hundred-weight of gunpowder, would reform it in the least !”

*“Lawrence  
Boythorn.”*

It was impossible not to laugh at the energetic gravity with which he recommended this strong measure of reform. When we laughed, he threw up his head, and shook his broad chest, and again the whole country seemed to echo to his Ha, ha, ha ! It had not the least effect in disturbing the bird, whose sense of security was complete ; and who hopped about the table with its quick head now on this side and now on that, turning its bright sudden eye on its master, as if he were no more than another bird.<sup>1</sup>

—CHARLES DICKENS (“Bleak House”).

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<sup>1</sup> It would be pleasant to quote all that Dickens has to say concerning “Lawrence Boythorn.” This, however, being impracticable, the reader is referred to the ninth, thirteenth, and eighteenth chapters of “Bleak House.”



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